This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

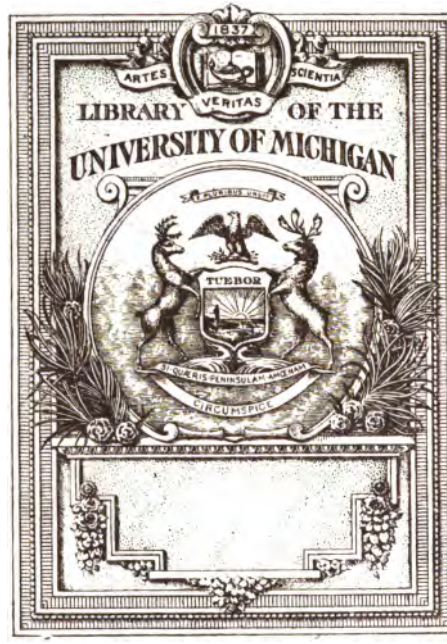
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

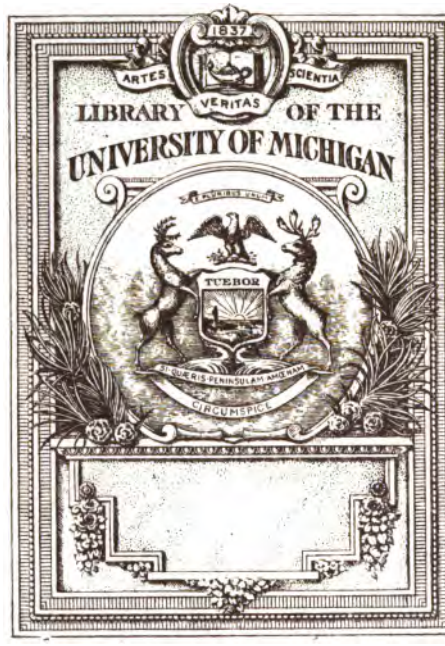
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

1317


1837
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
CIRCUMSPICE

LF
526
.G8
N47

1317


1837
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
CIRCUMSPICE

LF
526
.G8
N47

MEMOIR

OF

THOMAS HILL GREEN

EMOIR

OF

HILL GREEN

ALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD
SOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY
ERSITY OF OXFORD

BY

ETTLESHIP

OL COLLEGE, OXFORD

ORT PREFACE

FOR THIS EDITION BY

H. GREEN

ORTRAIT

EEN, AND CO.
ROW, LONDON
D BOMBAY

reserved

MEMOIR

OF

THOMAS HILL GREEN

LATE FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD
AND WHYTE'S PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BY

R. L. NETTLESHIP

FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH A SHORT PREFACE

SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THIS EDITION BY

MRS. T. H. GREEN

WITH PORTRAIT

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY
1906

All rights reserved

© 29 Mr. 15 G.

PREFACE

A STRONG wish has been expressed by some old friends that the memoir of my husband written by his friend and pupil, Mr. R. L. Nettleship, should be published in a form separate from the *Works*. I am very glad that, with the kind co-operation of Messrs. Longmans, I am able to fulfil this wish.

I am specially anxious that this memoir should be more widely read, not only on account of its intrinsic worth or of its personal interest, but also because Mr. Nettleship devoted several of the best years of his short life to the work of editing my husband's writings, especially in philosophy, and I hope that this little book may be a memorial to the unselfish and devoted work of the writer as well as to the subject of the memoir.

In the preparation of this volume I have been advised and helped by Mr. A. C. Bradley. Beyond the arrangement of the text in chapters, the division

323476

of some paragraphs, and two or three minute changes of phraseology, no alteration has been made in the memoir.

The volumes of my husband's writings referred to in it are: *The Works of T. H. Green*, in three volumes, and *The Prolegomena to Ethics*. The two addresses on *The Witness of God* and *Faith* and the *Lectures on Political Obligation*, which are contained in the *Works*, are also published separately.

I conclude by quoting the last paragraph of Mr. Nettleship's original preface (dated 1888), with the omission of one sentence containing a kind reference to myself:

'The memoir is, from the nature of the case, little more than a record of T. H. Green's opinions; and I have given it, as far as possible, in his own words. The materials were derived from his published writings, his letters, and the recollections of those who knew him. His only continuous correspondence was with his family, between 1850 and 1870, and this his sisters have most kindly placed at my disposal. Neither these nor the other letters to which I had access were of a kind to be printed entire, but they have supplied a great deal of valuable information. For reminiscences and other assistance, I have to thank the following gentlemen: Professor J. Bryce, Mr. R.

Buckell, Professor A. V. Dicey, the Rev. C. Evans, Mr. C. A. Fyffe, the Rev. A. Grenfell, Mr. D. Hanbury, the Rev. E. Hatch, Mr. A. G. Liddell, Professor H. Nettleship, Mr. W. L. Newman, Mr. J. Richardson, Professor H. Sidgwick, Sir E. Strachey, Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey, Mr. J. A. Symonds, the Rev. A. R. Vardy. I am also indebted to Professor E. Caird, Professor A. C. Bradley, and Professor A. Goodwin, for reading the proofs of the memoir and making suggestions.'

CHARLOTTE B. GREEN.

OXFORD, 1906.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	BOYHOOD AND SCHOOL LIFE	1
II.	EARLY LIFE AT OXFORD	11
III.	CHOICE OF A PROFESSION	39
IV.	SCHOOLS ENQUIRY COMMISSION—VIEWS ON EDUCATION	59
V.	TUTORSHIP AT BALLIOL	85
VI.	METAPHYSICAL PRINCIPLES	109
VII.	RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES	129
VIII.	CIVIC ACTIVITY	162
IX.	MORAL AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES	194
	INDEX	253

MEMOIR

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD AND SCHOOL LIFE

A MAN who spends most of his life in thinking, speaking, and writing about philosophy and religion, and in quietly promoting the political and social interests of the town in which he lives, is not likely to supply material for a striking biography. His life is his work, and his work is to be found in books and pupils, in institutions which he helped to establish, and in the public spirit which he helped to create. To those who knew him these things speak for themselves, and to those who did not know him they cannot be made eloquent by description. The enthusiasm called forth by his death soon subsides, and the power diffused from his life resumes the quiet channels in which it had hitherto flowed. The object of this short memoir is not to depict an heroic character or an eventful career, nor to popularise or criticise a philosophical system; nor can it offer much matter of general interest drawn from correspondence or personal reminiscences. It seeks merely to record a fact which has never been common and which is especially rare

in England, the fact of a life in which philosophy was reconciled with religion on the one side and with politics on the other; the life of a man to whom reason was faith made articulate, and for whom both faith and reason found their highest expression in good citizenship.

Thomas Hill Green was the youngest of four children, two sons and two daughters. He was born April 7, 1836, at Birkin, a village in the West Riding of Yorkshire, of which his father, Valentine Green, was rector. His paternal grandfather was a squire living at Normanton-le-heath in Leicestershire, who married a Miss Mortimer of Caldwell Hall in Derbyshire. An ancestor of this lady, John Mortimer, whose first wife was a granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell, afterwards married a daughter of one of Cromwell's officers, Colonel Sanders, and from her the Greens were descended. Mrs. Valentine Green was the eldest daughter of Edward Thomas Vaughan, vicar of St. Martin and All Saints at Leicester; her mother was a daughter of Daniel Thomas Hill of Aylesbury, whose son, vicar of Chesterfield and afterwards archdeacon of Derby, gave the living of Birkin to Valentine Green.

Mrs. Green died when Thomas was only a year old, and the children were brought up by their father until the boys went to school. Birkin was seven miles from any town, and they seem to have lived very much to themselves, with plenty of open air and freedom, doing not many lessons but doing them well, never questioning and scarcely feeling the authority of their father. He was not a man of whom the world knew much, but he was what few men succeed in

being, the best friend of his children. Those who knew him speak of his deep religious feeling unencumbered with dogmatic learning, of his native eloquence, his love for the peasantry, his keen interest in politics, his humorous observation of men; and when further we hear his son in a letter regretting that 'the union of magnanimity, indolence, and a bad digestion' had prevented his father from making the best of himself, we understand how many points of affinity there must have been between the two. Thomas was not at all a precocious boy. He was slow in acquiring knowledge, and learnt by heart with difficulty; but his nurse, Hannah Carr, to whom he owed a great deal, always maintained that he would some day make his mark in the world. The few early letters which remain already show signs of the maturity, circumstantiality, and humorous sarcasm of his later correspondence. Nor does his moral judgment seem to have been less pronounced, for at the age of thirteen he writes of another boy, 'I dislike him very much still; his rudeness, greediness, impudence, and ingratitude are unparalleled.'

In the summer of 1850, when he was fourteen, he went to school at Rugby, then under the head-mastership of E. M. Goulburn. He was placed in the 'first fifth' form, where they were reading Herodotus, Sophocles, and Virgil. In the following summer he went into the 'Twenty,' and at the beginning of 1852 into the sixth form, where he remained for three years and a half. After the first annoyances which were sure to meet a rather odd, shy, and homebred boy, he settled down contentedly enough to his new life. But he never became a thorough schoolboy, either of

the athletic or of the intellectual type. He played football indeed regularly, and ran in 'hare and hounds,' but more for the sake of health, or from a sense of duty, or to avoid singularity, than because he liked it. His ability soon made itself felt both by masters and boys, but in the regular work of the school, though he never fell below a fair level, he seldom gained great distinction. This was due to several reasons. In the first place he was always deficient in alertness and versatility, both of mind and body. Many boys who do not grow into intellectual men are stimulated to intellectual efforts at school by the competitive impulse or by the simple pleasure of activity; but he was not appealed to by either of these motives. 'He is slow and easily puzzled'; 'there is a certain inertness about him; he has not much ambition'; 'I fear that he is constitutionally indolent'; such are the judgments of his masters in 1850, 1851, and 1853. He wrote slowly in examinations, was constantly behindhand with his exercises, and had great difficulty in getting up in the morning. But a stronger reason for his apparent want of success was the fact that his heart was not in the subjects in which distinction at school is chiefly won. He had not the interest either in language or in learning which makes a great scholar. He had indeed a genuine literary sense, and his own power of expression was far above the average; but he needed the presence of something great to make him put out his strength. This was strikingly shown on the single occasion (1855) on which, to the wonder of everybody, he gained the prize for Latin prose composition. The passage to be translated was taken from Milton's *Areopagitica*, and under its inspiration

he produced a version in which he surpassed himself even more than his competitors. While he was thus indifferent to the study of literary form, except as a vehicle for his own best thought, he was also impatient of research and averse to diffuse reading. The first time that he competed for the Queen's medal he complains that, though the judges liked his essay the best, they gave the prize to another boy 'because his essay showed more labour, *i.e.* came out of thirteen books instead of his own head.' In the next competition he was successful, contrary to his own expectation, for the subject was one for which he had 'to consult a variety of fusty authorities, which I never can succeed in doing well; I always find that if I cram myself with the ideas of others, my own all vanish.' This love of mental independence remained with him through life, and when towards the end of his school career his father expostulated with him on his 'dilatory habits,' he was able (while fully admitting the charge) to answer with perfect sincerity, 'the reason why most people think me idle is that I cannot think it right to devote myself to the ordinary studies of school and college, which to me at least are of very little profit; and hence the fruits of my labours do not at present appear, but I hope they will do in time.'

There can be little doubt that if, while he was in the sixth form, he had come in contact with a dominating and sympathetic mind, his constitutional inertness would have been to a great extent overcome, and his deeper ambition developed and guided. But this was not the case. Of his house-master C. Evans, and of his first two form-masters, G. G. Bradley, the present dean of Westminster, and R. L.

Cotton, afterwards bishop of Calcutta, he speaks with respect and admiration; but between him and Dr. Goulburn there was little sympathy or mutual appreciation. As regards one point, indeed, the maintenance of discipline, the head-master freely recognised his services, and publicly thanked him for them when he was leaving the school. This is noticeable, because the exercise of authority under difficulties was peculiarly distasteful to him, and cost him a great moral effort. The weakness which in some form or another limits the strength of most strong characters appeared in him as a tendency to shrink from things involving danger and enterprise. The sense of conflict between what he would have called 'the flesh and the spirit' seemed to be constantly present to him, but he felt 'the flesh' rather as something which tempted him to neglect or shun great opportunities than as a source of passionate impulse to do what he thought wrong. At the same time he showed, especially in youth, a 'certain solid wilfulness, a certain grave rebelliousness' (to use the words of one of his friends), which prompted him to go his own way regardless of conventions and rules. Thus the observance and maintenance of authority was made doubly difficult to him, and the sense of duty which enabled him to overcome this difficulty was always a prominent feature, perhaps the most obviously prominent feature, in his character. This sense of duty, combined with a strong sympathy with the weak and friendless, made him at school a staunch upholder of the monitorial system. Writing from Rugby to his father in 1854, on occasion of a letter from Dr. Vaughan to Lord Palmerston on the subject, he says, 'The spirit of the

age, raving against everything that sounds like oppression, seems likely to establish a worse tyranny in public schools, as everywhere else; for it is impossible for bullying to be stopped except by præpostors.'

Of the subjects other than school work and discipline which were occupying his mind during these years, there is very little evidence. That he was one of the recognised 'politicians' of the school, and that he was considered (in spite of his own protestations to the contrary) a 'dreadful radical,' we learn from his letters. They also reveal a constitutional antipathy to popery and everything that savoured of it. In 1854 we hear of his reading Maurice's 'Theological Essays' and 'Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament,' and of the former book he observes that 'its merits, as is usually the case, seem to be in exact counter-proportion to the abuse which has been heaped upon it.' Carlyle and Kingsley were also among his favourite authors. Of the beginnings of his interest in philosophy only one or two traces remain; he refers himself in 1852 to a 'tough bit of Aristotle' set in an examination, which he was the only one to make out, and a schoolfellow tells of his attempt to impart some 'elementary metaphysical conceptions' in connexion with a bridge on the Newbold road; 'he endeavoured to make me understand that we each of us saw a different bridge.'

These meagre indications are to some extent supplemented by the general reminiscences of his contemporaries. Those who knew him evidently felt that in mind and character he stood outside and above them. 'I can remember,' writes one, 'that from the first I had an impression of him as living a

life of his own, apart from the general stream of boy-life. It could not be said that he affected eccentricity or solitude, but he did not throw himself either into work or play with any ordinary boyish eagerness or ambition; so that he was not generally influential, nor exactly popular; and yet it was generally felt that this aloofness, this outside attitude, was not due to any want of energy; and it gave him a peculiar impressiveness to a small number. To me he was mainly impressive through his thoughtfulness and literary interests; the vigour of his interest and the independence of his judgment on subjects outside the range of ordinary school talk. It was largely due to his influence that I went up to Cambridge with aspirations and tendencies towards something other than classical scholarship.' Another writes, 'He was a boy apart, not mixing much in any of the ordinary life of schoolboys. He was not tempted by the common prizes, nor was he concerned with school games or school parties. He comes before my memory first as a good thinker and speaker at the school debating society. I remember the early attraction of his absolute freedom from the party jealousies and boyish forms of pride which were rife enough at Rugby, but of which he was incapable. I remember too the early independence of his mind, which did not run in the ordinary groove of studious boys, led by able tutors. He was a plant growing, not a brick being moulded.' Another friend, now head-master of a school himself, thus described him in an address to his boys; 'In old days at Rugby we knew that we had a remarkable schoolfellow in the house. Even then he seemed to us boys (as in later days to others) to have some of the character of Crom-

well about him, his favourite hero. A sixth fellow, who very seldom seemed to use his power, but yet in whose presence no one in the house would have found it possible to use a bad word or tell a ribald story; a water-drinker in those days, when he was probably the only one of four hundred to be so; never known to say an unkind word or do an unkind deed to any other boy in the school; going out even then on Sunday afternoons in the fields by himself, and not ashamed, when he was laughed at about it, to silence us by saying with a smile, that he could worship God best in the green fields by himself.'

With a boy like this it is not surprising that few of his fellows were intimate. He seems to have had only one great friendship at Rugby, and that was broken tragically by the illness, and ultimately the insanity, of his friend. He was not given to talking about his personal sorrows, but the little that he says on this occasion is enough to show how much he felt; 'It is a great grief to me; he was the only real friend I ever made at school, and I had always been in the habit of looking forward to our going through life together.' This experience came at the same time with family troubles of which he had to bear the chief burden, and the two together must have deepened his sense, already deep, of the serious side of life. His last year at Rugby he describes as very lonely and wearisome; most of his acquaintances had left, the few who remained were too young to satisfy him, and the other boys seemed to him 'not only children but disagreeable children.' Yet he did not look forward very hopefully to Oxford, being, as he confesses, 'always inclined to find fault with his future

lot.' He had been there in 1854, and formed views of the university which are not usual in a lad of eighteen. 'The insides of the colleges,' he writes, 'are strangely incongruous with the outside. The finest colleges are the most corrupt, the functionaries from the heads to the servants being wholly given to quiet dishonesty, and the undergraduates to sensual idleness.' And again: 'I shall be happy there if I can work hard. But the temptations to idleness seem innumerable. My chief one would be those most luxurious canoes, in which one can paddle for hours under the most delicious shade, without the least exertion, and undisturbed by eights or such abominations.' These apprehensions were not justified by the event; but his innate dislike of luxury combined with his innate tendency to indolence made him to the end of his life feel strongly, perhaps too strongly, this side of the dangers of Oxford life.

CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE AT OXFORD

In October, 1855, Green entered Balliol college, where rooms had already been offered him after the examination for scholarships. Report had given him a favourable opinion of the college, as regards both cheapness of living and excellence of teaching, and to get a fellowship there was already his 'great hope at Oxford.' At first the hope did not seem likely to be realised. What had happened at school was repeated at the university. He admitted the excellence of the lectures, but classical scholarship had little attraction for him, and after two years of comparative idleness interrupted by spasmodic efforts he only obtained a second class in 'moderations.' Stung by the sense of failure, and stimulated by his college tutor, Benjamin Jowett, and by Charles Parker, with whom he read privately, he now worked hard for a year and a half, and in the summer of 1859 gained a first class in the school of *literæ humaniores*, impressing the examiners as the ablest among several able candidates. He then read hurriedly for six months for the school of law and modern history, and though he only got a third class, added considerably to his knowledge. In 1860 he was employed to lecture on ancient and modern history at Balliol, and in November of that

year he achieved his youthful ambition by being elected a fellow of the college.

The view which he himself took of his career at Oxford appears from two letters to his father, the first telling of his first class, the second of his fellowship. 'The chief pleasure I derive from my success lies in being able to tell you of it, and I am truly thankful for having been enabled to redeem to some extent the wasted years of my past life.' 'When I look back on my past career it seems to me that my improvement is mainly due to the society of the senior friends with whom it has been my happiness to fall in, viz. Jowett, Conington, and C. Parker. But for their constantly stirring me up, I should have sunk into permanent lethargy.' These self-accusations were perhaps only half deserved, but the sense of what he owed to his friends was none the less genuine; as he once said of himself in Johnson's words, 'the goodwill of my fellow-men is inexpressibly dear to me.' Of the three men mentioned here, Jowett was the one to whom he owed the greatest and most lasting debt. In his first term he wrote, 'my tutor is most kind to me, and I like him exceedingly. I breakfast with him occasionally, when he talks to me freely, and not the commonplaces which such men generally do to their pupils.' Experience confirmed and deepened these first impressions. Three years and a half later he says, 'the more I see of him the more I am convinced of his remarkable goodness and genius'; and this conviction he retained to the end of his life. In the period between 1860 and 1866, when the connexion between them became closer, Jowett's advice was probably the strongest among the various influences which

determined his career; and in later years nothing cost him so much effort or such searchings of heart as the rare occasions on which he was obliged to disagree with his former tutor.

His friendship with John Conington, the professor of Latin, was one in which the disparity of age was partly equalised by the unusual strength and maturity of the younger man. Conington made a point of cultivating the acquaintance of remarkable undergraduates, and lived largely on their sympathy and society. In spite of many divergences in studies and interests, there was, says Green, 'a wonderful compatibility between us.' 'What was common to them,' writes one who was the friend of both, 'was a certain nobility of mental attitude, a great seriousness and love for the profounder aspects of things, and all the deep sympathies of the religious temperament.' It was with Conington that he spent parts of his first four long vacations, at Keswick, Freshwater, Instow, and Whitby successively; and those who know Oxford life know how integral a part of it is the long vacation 'reading-party,' in which books and lectures are digested and discussed, friendships are formed and cemented, and body and mind expand in beautiful scenery and congenial society.

The country was to Green a source of many-sided enjoyment. Walking was his favourite exercise, and though he was not an adventurous mountaineer, nothing heightened his vitality so surely as mountain air. His topographical sense moreover was unusually strong; one of his first steps in a new place was to master its geography, and he took as much pleasure in finding a good route as other people do in finding

a cheap one. A deeper source of enjoyment lay in his love of country people. He seemed to feel himself at home with them at once, and seized without effort the political and economical features of their life. 'What he most enjoyed in scenery,' says a friend who travelled much with him, 'was an upland prospect with some breadth of cultivated land. Those who have ever heard it will remember the peculiar smack of his utterance of the word *tilth*.' It was this interest in the country as the meeting-point of man with nature that specially attracted him to Wordsworth, and made him speak of the *Ode to duty* as 'the high-water-mark of modern poetry.' Nature appealed to his imagination, not, as it has done to some men, as a miracle of form and colour inviting and defying reproduction, nor, as it has done to others, as an elemental force in whose presence man finds peace by escaping from himself, but rather as the sympathetic background to human life and the kindred revelation of a divine intelligence.

While he was thus receiving influence from his elders, he was making himself felt by his fellow-students, some of whom have recorded their impressions of him. 'His appearance was striking in those days, and made him a familiar figure even to those who did not know him personally. Thick black hair, dark eyebrows, eyes of rich brown with a peculiarly stedfast look, were the features which first struck one; and with these there was a remarkable seriousness of expression, an air of solidity and quiet strength. He knew comparatively few people, and of these only a very few intimately, having no taste for those sports in which university acquaintances are most frequently

made, and seldom appearing at breakfasts or wine-parties. This caused him to pass for unsocial; and I remember having felt a slight sense of awe or alarm, the first time I found myself seated beside him. But as one came to know him better, one quickly perceived that under his reserve there lay not only a great capacity for affection,—no man was more tenacious of his friendships,—but qualities that made him a delightful companion. His tendency to solitude sprang not from pride but from the occupation of his mind by subjects which seldom weigh on men of his age. He had, even when a boy at school, been grappling with the problems of metaphysics and theology: and they had given a tinge of gravity to his manner. The relief to that gravity lay in his humour, which was not only abundant but genial and sympathetic. It used to remind us of Carlyle, but in him it was more kindly, and, above all, more lenient to ordinary people. While averse, perhaps too severely averse, from whatever was luxurious or frivolous in undergraduate life, he had the warmest interest in, and the strongest sympathy for, the humbler classes. No man had a truer love for social equality, or a higher sense of the dignity of simple human nature. He liked to meet farmers and tradespeople on their own level, and knew how to do so without seeming to condescend; the belief in the duty of approaching the people directly and getting them to form and express their own views was at the root of all his political doctrines. Though apt to be silent in general company, no one could be more agreeable when you were alone with him. We used to say of him—and his seniors said the same—that you never talked to

him without carrying away something to remember and ponder over. On everything he said or wrote there was stamped the impress of a forcible individuality, a mind that thought for itself, and whose thoughts had the rugged strength of an original character wherein grimness was mingled with humour, and practical shrewdness with a love for abstract speculation. His independence appeared even in the way he pursued his studies. With abilities of the highest order, he cared comparatively little for the distinctions which the university offers; choosing rather to follow out his own line of reading in the way he judged most permanently useful, than to devote himself to the pursuit of honours and prizes.'[1]

This was written in 1882, on a retrospect of some twenty years; the following extract from a journal kept by another friend in 1862 gives us a contemporary view. 'Of all my college associates except one, none have a character better worth notice, few a character more difficult to seize, or to describe with truth. Maturity, ripeness, almost over-ripeness, is one of his characteristics. This marks him off from the men of his standing. He is never silly, never flippant. A certain weight hangs on what he says: you may disagree with it, you can never safely put it aside without consideration. A keen sense of humour and a tinge of dreaminess give a peculiar charm to his conversation when he is at his ease and in one of his best moods. A person who had known Clough told me that Green recalled Clough to him, but that Clough was at once more poetical and more indolently dreamy than Green. If this is true, Clough must have been

[1] James Bryce, in *Contemporary Review*, May, 1882.

oppressed by a large amount of "Schwärmerei," for Green's most patent peculiarity is a special kind of indolence. No man is driven with greater difficulty to work not to his taste. At college simple inactivity cost him a "first" at moderations, an honour which though somewhat esteemed is constantly obtained by men of no ability and of infinitely slight acquirements. He wrote some of the best college essays: he never sent them in on the right day, and might generally be seen on the Monday pondering over essays which everyone else had sent in on the Friday night. As a set-off, his writings were well expressed and worth perusal, while the mass of writings composed or scribbled off between eleven on Friday night and one on Saturday could not be read, even by their authors, without some shame and disgust. Whether indeed Green's indolence could be separated from his maturity, is to me doubtful. They are both the two sides of the same disposition.

'His political views have always made a link between us. He is a philosophic radical, but of a very peculiar kind. Almost all his definite opinions might be endorsed by Bright or Cobden, but neither Bright nor Cobden could understand the process by which Green's opinions are obtained, nor the arguments by which they are defended. An idealist in philosophy, he argues for the most utilitarian of political schools on idealist principles; and attaching the greatest importance to national life, constantly expresses a contempt for so-called "national honour" and imperial greatness which might perhaps offend the nationalism of even Mr. Cobden. At the time when Mr. Bright had offended England by his "Perish

Savoy," Green read a most able essay on "National life." One sentence still remains in my recollection, "Let the flag of England be dragged through the dirt rather than sixpence be added to the taxes which weigh on the poor." This sentence contains a partial explanation at least of the apparent contradictions contained in his political ideas. The noblest feature in his character is a serious sympathy with the wrongs and sufferings of the poor. All those social facts, such as the suffering caused by taxation, the necessity of peace to ensure even a possibility of prosperity for the labouring classes, which rarely occur to the recollection, and never trouble the enjoyments of university men, are, I truly believe, constantly present to his mind. Hence a contempt, more excusable and natural than philosophic, for those theories of national honour and greatness which are, it is true, only the expression of political vanity, and always tend to postpone social reforms to considerations of dignity and reputation.

'Green occasionally expressed his opinions to the Oxford Union. His two or three speeches, though badly delivered, were the most remarkable I heard during my residence at Oxford. Anyone who knows the Union will not need to be told that a society which would applaud claptrap, personalities, flippancy, and impertinence to the echo, would hardly give a hearing to Green. He was the most unpopular of speakers. Nor indeed, though much esteemed by a few friends, and much respected by everyone, is he generally popular. His indolence makes him neglect all care in cultivating or preserving friendships. Unsusceptible himself, he pays little heed to other persons' minor

susceptibilities, and by some strange perversity of nature says things which at once hurt and amuse his friends. Thus, when I was greatly delighted by a university success, he told me that my pleasure would not last, and at a time when I was extremely anxious about the schools, informed me that men who (like myself) took part in the Union debates, rarely got firsts. A want of power to fling himself into the feeling of the moment, to "enter into things," and something which I must call a deficiency in romance, are to my mind the source of all that can be said against his agreeableness. And when all his social defects are reckoned up, he remains to me one of the most agreeable, as well as one of the most estimable, of my friends. He is one of the few men of my own age of whom I can truly say that his example has tended to keep up one's moral tone. When anyone remembers the flippant frivolity of the tone often prevalent at Oxford, it is impossible not to admire a man whose serious thoughtfulness tended to make his associates think seriously.'

The essay on 'National life' here referred to was written for an essay society called the 'Old Mortality,' to which many of the abler Oxford men of that time belonged. The essay itself is not preserved, nor is another written in 1858 on 'Political idealism,' which seems to have made a great impression on those who heard it. In the minutes of the society it is described as 'designed to oppose views prevalent in the present day regarding the influence of general laws on national and social development. The writer asserted that human society could not be looked upon as a mere machine, and that the results of such

doctrines were highly pernicious, as destroying individual effort, and preventing men of ability and virtue from engaging in politics. The opinions now in vogue were contrasted with those that prevailed two hundred years ago, representative passages being read from Milton and Buckle respectively. The essayist concluded by pleading for the recognition of a nation's moral responsibilities, and showed how infinitely important it was that lofty ideas on the duties of the individual to the state should be more widely diffused.'

Of the essays, also referred to above, which he wrote as an undergraduate for the college authorities, a good many still exist, and an extract from one of them upon 'Loyalty' will serve at once to illustrate his maturity of thought and expression, and to show how early he had formed his characteristic views of political society. 'In no depth of their debasement have men consented to confine the range of the mind within the limits of the fleshly tabernacle, which is the seat of its imprisonment. The tendency to form societies, and the reverence for supernatural beings, which even in the darkest days have never been obliterated, are evidences that men were dimly conscious, at once, that their minds were not isolated mechanisms, but pervaded with a life properly the same in every part, and that this life in its turn had its foundations in the life of a higher being. It is in these instincts that loyalty has its origin, but before they attain to so high a manifestation, they display their power in several lower forms of the same principle. As the earliest and rudest of these we may perhaps reckon the love of home, which we find in Homer as a leading characteristic of the early Greeks, and which

we still attribute to Indians and savage tribes. For this love of home was a great deal more than a phrenological organ of habitativeness. It could never have bound men together as it did, had it not been closely connected with reverence for the local or domestic shrine of God,—"the God that maketh men to be of one mind in an house,"—as displayed in their clinging to a common hearth. A higher manifestation of the same feeling may be found in chivalry and the feudal system, for the supposition of divine right in the king or chieftain shows that it had other than earthly sanctions, and the acknowledgment of reciprocal obligations between chieftain and retainer betokens the sense of our common life. I call it a higher manifestation than the love of home, for ideally it requires obedience to a truly superior will, and embodies a reverence for plighted faith. But actually a superior will was generally confounded with a greater power of violence, and faith was often plighted for an evil end, and the reverence for it was blind and fitful. Chivalry therefore required to be superseded by loyalty, which demands the same reverence and obedience regulated and controlled by being directed towards a settled law, a law which at once proceeds from and has for its object the common nature of man, and is therefore endowed with the authority of the creator of that nature. . . . The truly loyal man is not he who shouts for king and constitution, or who yields a blind obedience to the routine of existing institutions, but he who looks beyond these to the universal law of the common reason of man, and in reverence for this yields a willing and hearty obedience to the rules in which it embodies itself for

the establishment of right dealing in society, rules which, except so far as they have been distorted by violence, have only varied to adapt themselves to the varying affairs of men. And if loyalty is the natural enemy of tyranny, as that which ignores the law founded in the reason of which all are partakers, so is it no less opposed to a selfish seeking for individual gain. Recognising the duty owed by all to the supreme power and common good of the state, the loyal man is bound to his fellow-citizens in the unity of a common object, which gives to the private pursuits of his daily life their value and spiritual meaning.'

A few of his opinions as an undergraduate on contemporary politics can be gathered from the letters to his father and sisters. His antipathy to Louis Napoleon, whom he regarded as no better than a 'successful brigand,' comes out strongly on occasion of the attempt of Orsini and the proposed Conspiracy bill. 'I see bishop Spencer has been preparing a form of thanksgiving for the preservation of the imperial life, in which the flunkeyism of English residents at Paris is skilfully compounded with religious phrases, the result being, to anyone who looks at the facts, blasphemy.' 'I was quite off my head with joy when I heard that Palmerston had been defeated. Indeed the prospect of the Conspiracy bill being carried had weighed so on my mind, that I almost forgot to eat my bread. If it had been carried, Belgium and Geneva and Sardinia would scarcely have been able to hold up a hand for freedom any longer.' His previous suspicions of lord Palmerston were turned into decided hostility by his action on this occasion, and on his death in 1865 he writes, 'I cannot pretend

to be sorry, being persuaded that he did about as much harm as it is possible for an individual Englishman to do nowadays.' But he distinguished strongly the anti-Napoleonic from the anti-Gallican feeling, of which the *Times* was making itself the exponent, and he did not share in the sympathy felt at Oxford for Montalembert on his conviction for the pamphlet *Un débat sur l'Inde*. It was partly no doubt as a symptom of warlike feeling that he disliked the formation of the volunteer rifle corps, but also because he regarded it as hostile to the people. 'Fools talk at Oxford of its being desirable, in order that the gentry may keep down the chartists in the possible contingency of a rising. I should like to learn the use of the arm that I might be able to desert to the people, if it came to such a pass. After all we do not know what may arise from the hunger produced by a European war.' Of the war of 1859 he was an almost impartial spectator. He had already prophesied in 1856 that the conflicting interests of France and Austria in Italy, 'being the interests of rogues, must cause a quarrel, with the discontent of the people to embitter it,' and when the struggle came his chief hope was that 'it will at least teach Englishmen not to put their trust in despots, but in free national governments.'

His admiration for John Bright was fully grown in 1858, when he brought forward a motion eulogistic of him at the Oxford Union. 'It was frantically opposed, and after two days' discussion I found myself in a minority of two. I am almost ashamed to belong to a university which is in such a state of darkness.' The speeches of Bright to which he alludes

with special enthusiasm are that on India in the House of Commons, June 24, 1858, those on reform and foreign policy, at Birmingham, October 27 and 29 of the same year, and at Rochdale, January 28, 1859, and that on the national defences in the House of Commons, August 3, 1860; the last he describes as 'that of a sober man among drunkards.' Many things combined to make Bright a statesman after his own heart; his belief in the moral responsibility of nations, his love of the people, his unclerical piety, the noble simplicity and restrained passion of his eloquence. In 1864 he had the pleasure of meeting him at Oxford, and writes, 'I can best describe him as a great "brick." He is simple as a boy, full of fun, with a very pleasant flow of conversation and lots of good stories. He does not seem to mind what he says to anybody, but though he is sufficiently brusque, his good humour saves him from ever seeming rude. There is nothing declamatory or pretentious about his talk; indeed, though very pleasant, it would not be particularly striking but for the strong feeling which it sometimes shows.'

Enough has been said to show the main bent of his political interests at this time. We have seen how one of his contemporaries called him a 'philosophic radical'; it would be equally true to say that he was 'a religious radical.' He was 'philosophic,' in so far as he had already a coherent theory of life, and instinctively regarded new facts and events in the light of that theory; he was 'religious,' in so far as his theory required for its coherence the conception of a spirit which is revealed in nature and man, but is not contained in either; he was a 'radical,' in so far

as he believed that participation in a common rational nature conferred on every man the right of free development and imposed on every man the duty of furthering that development in himself and others. And while he sometimes gave the impression of being divided between the interests of politics, theology, and philosophy, this division is not one which in his own heart he would have recognised or admitted. He could not indeed live at once the life of a member of parliament, of a minister of religion, and of a student of philosophy; and as each of these lives had a certain attraction for him, he was not free (though more free than most men) from distraction. But into whatever mould he had been by circumstances eventually cast, he would have left nothing of himself outside it; and it was this solidarity in his interests which gave its peculiar force to what he said and did. It was because he saw in history the self-development of an eternal spirit, because he regarded religion as the highest form of citizenship, because he believed reason to be at once the most human and the most divine thing in man, that he could be comprehensive without vagueness, elevated without loss of geniality, reverent without superstition. It is therefore worth while to see what religious and philosophical views he had formed in these early years at Oxford, and in what connexion they stood with his views on politics.

The writers from whom he seems at this time to have assimilated the most were Wordsworth, Carlyle, Maurice, and probably Fichte in his lectures on the 'nature' and 'vocation' of 'the scholar' and of 'man.' In them he found the congenial idea of a divine life or spirit pervading the world, making

nature intelligible, giving unity to history, embodying itself in states and churches, and inspiring individual men of genius. A few quotations from the published papers on *The force of circumstances* and *The influence of civilisation on genius*, and from some unpublished essays, will illustrate his various applications of this idea. The keynote of much of his later writing is found in a passage already quoted, where he speaks of the 'tendency to form societies and the reverence for supernatural beings' as the twofold evidence of the higher nature of man, and the twofold source of loyalty. He there regards the impulse which has produced and maintained (however imperfectly) family life, the system of chivalry, and the free constitutions of modern Europe, as the same in kind with that which has produced and maintained true religion. Thus the spiritual appears to him as the natural at its highest, and the natural at its highest as that which carries men beyond the limitations of their bodily organisation into ever-widening circles of community with other men and ultimately with God. It was a partial obedience to this impulse, he thought, which made the political greatness of Greece and Rome. 'The spirit of the family, the unity of the state, were to the Greek and Roman citizen the divine realities by partaking in which he felt himself to be.' With christianity the impulse was carried to a higher power; 'the feelings with which the ancients regarded their political constitutions are now almost entirely transferred to the law of the church, whether that law be found in the bible, in councils, or in popes'; but the christian conception of the church added to the ancient conception of the state

the thought of 'an ever-present spirit of life,' 'which does not operate here and there only, but wherever it will.' The good citizen of antiquity was naturally a 'conservative'; to him 'a change in the laws was rather profane than impolitic,' for 'the only divinity which hedged the state or elevated and protected individual life, was a divinity of the past, the divine or heroic act by which the city was founded and the laws framed; and which was perpetuated in the chain of constitutional usage.' But in a modern christian, who can 'believe in the immanence of a divine life in the church,' such 'reverence for the past and aversion to all that is new and untried' implies 'a distrust in humanity.' The true 'church,' then, as is here suggested, is that all-embracing spiritual life of which both civil and ecclesiastical institutions ought to be the vehicles, but which 'at times quits the shelter of positive laws, and takes up its abode in the conscience of individuals.' It is at such times that 'faith' or 'belief in the unseen,' so far from inculcating submission to established authority, becomes 'the source of that appeal to an inward witness by which individuals have at all times justified their rebellion against the church.' [1]

The same 'ever-present spirit of life,' which to the individual soul is both the justification of loyalty and the spring of progress, is also the ground of its immortality. The growth of the conception of a life beyond the bodily life is parallel to that of the conception of the human self and of human society.

[1] From college essays on 'Authority and private judgment' and 'Conservatism,' and an essay written for the Ellerton theological prize in 1860. He wrote twice for this prize, both times unsuccessfully.

'Our view of the future world and the present are so closely connected that no shadow can pass over the one which does not extend itself to the other.' Thus 'among a people who have no sense of a law superior to their own wilfulness' there can be no conception of 'permanent being or of absolute will, and one or other of these conceptions is the necessary condition of a belief in immortality.' The influence of the ties of the family, clan, or state, the desire to live in the memory of future ages, the sense of obligation and affection to the dead, are all proofs of the power of men to free themselves from the bonds of nature and animality, and to assert in fact if not in theory their participation in a larger life. In the Jews the idea of an eternal being who creates, befriends, and judges man, gradually working itself free from sensuous imagery, local associations, and national prejudice, led the way to 'that divinisation of the whole human nature, through the taking of the manhood into God, which is indeed eternal life.' For 'eternal life is not presented to the christian as an ultimate reward, but as a present reality. It is the heritage which he already enjoys as fellow-heir with Christ. "He that believeth on me," says our Lord, "hath eternal life." By thus believing he eats Christ's flesh and drinks his blood, he dwells in Christ and Christ in him. In Christ he becomes one with God, he partakes of the divine nature, and even in the flesh lives an eternal life by the faith of the Son of God.' But while life and immortality were thus for the first time brought to light by the life and death of Christ, they will not be 'fully shown forth in his children, till the entire human personality, body as well as spirit, affection

as well as reason, sensation as well as thought, is brought into the divine unity.' [1]

In the paper on *The force of circumstances* [2] the relation of the divine spirit to the human individual is more particularly developed. The 'environment' or 'system' of which each man may be regarded as the centre, is not 'the outcome of the workings of the human mind,' nor on the other hand is the human mind its creature or slave. If rightly regarded, it manifests to us in various ways 'the spirit in whom we live, and move, and have our being'; through what we call the 'external world,' the divine mind, in whose likeness we are, is continually communicated to us, and in this communication we find ourselves and attain freedom. This is true whether by the 'external world' we understand physical nature, or that connected web of events of which the deeds of ourselves and our forefathers have made us an inextricable part. In the former case it is by the discovery of laws, which the human mind does not make but which, when discovered, 'commend themselves to it as its proper inmates,' that it escapes from bondage to nature. In the latter case an analogous identification of himself with the law revealed in his surroundings enables a man to bring good out of evil; he becomes free, not by flying from the inevitable nor by blindly acquiescing in it, but by recognising in his very weakness and dependence the call of a being 'whose service is perfect freedom.' Thus man's liberty is proportionate to his originality; to the 'highest creative energy,' such as the faith of a martyr, all circumstances alike are

[1] Ellerton Essay, 1860.

[2] *Works of T. H. Green*, vol. iii. p. 3.

a malleable material; to lesser men circumstances are divided into favourable or unfavourable according as they evoke or repress their limited capabilities; while to the great masses of mankind the national institutions which they inherit and which are the most important of their 'circumstances,' have practically the influence of an uncontrollable destiny, except so far as through them 'the spiritual energy of the liberated few introduces an element of good into the force to which the many are subject.'

It is these 'liberated few' who are called 'men of genius,' and in the paper on *The influence of civilisation on genius*[1] the limitations are considered which the special circumstances of 'civilisation' impose upon even the greatest men of the modern world. The point of departure is the same as before; it is assumed that there is a 'divine idea of the world,' which is 'manifested in every created thing, under certain limitations from which it is evermore working itself free; the mind of man is the only manifestation which can enjoy the consciousness of its perfect original; it alone can win its way to harmonious communion with the idea, and apprehend that living will, on which "its dark foundations rest."' Such an apprehension 'in its highest and most general form' is declared to be 'the property of all the truly good; "by faith they understand that the things which are seen were not made by things which do appear"; conscious that God has a purpose in their life, and in remembrance of their home in him, they travel through this mortal life as citizens of a better land, and look on nature with other than human eyes.' This moral

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 11.

insight seems to be the same thing as what in the paper on *Force of circumstances* was called 'faith,' or 'the highest creative energy which deals with circumstances as it will'; from it the apprehension of the divine idea through the intellectual faculties is distinguished as 'genius' in the more specific sense of the word. The leading idea of the essay is that the unifying impulse, which is of the essence of such genius, is variously thwarted by 'the burden of divided knowledge' which modern civilisation imposes upon it; and it is characteristic that religion and politics are specially selected to illustrate this division. 'It is natural that the evil should be most noticeable in that "scientia scientiarum" in which genius ought to find the most direct approach to that home where alone it can rest. When our theological distinctions (or rather confusions) of justification and sanctification, of imputed and inherent righteousness, of actual and original sin, are no longer considered as so many metaphors, or logical forms, accommodated to the weakness of human thought, but have intruded themselves on the unity of divine truth, it is no wonder that genius should be excluded from the contemplation of the simplest and most sacred grandeur.' And again, 'the progressive apprehension of the divine idea must be closely connected with the hope of its fuller manifestation, and to one who is full of sympathy with his fellow-men, the most welcome manifestation would be in the political life of mankind. . . . In the days when, not in fancy but in sober seriousness, Vane built his splendid political theories, and Cromwell seemed about to embody them in act, when even the common people saw the dominion of the saints at

hand, Milton might well "see in his mind's eye a noble and puissant nation rousing itself, like a strong man after sleep," and even rise in thought from the perfection of earthly politics to the city of the heavenly host. But it is hard for men who are versed in political theories which have all been found wanting, and whose eyes are dimmed with the dust that rises from the hubbub of modern life, to see the history of mankind "orbing itself to a perfect end."

The unity of the world is the fact after which all philosophy is feeling. The character and circumstances of each particular thinker determine in what directions he most vividly realises the fact, and in what modes he most naturally expresses it. The strongest elements in Green's nature seem to have been the sense of public duty and the sense of religious dependence, and in the creeds of modern liberalism and modern evangelicalism he found a congenial language, which he had no difficulty in translating when he wished into that of German metaphysic. The passages quoted above indicate the position at which he had arrived at the age of four-and-twenty, and which he never really abandoned. The idea of a free personality, exercising its freedom under conditions which it has itself created, formed the meeting-point for his political and religious aspirations. In the light of this idea he interpreted to himself the problems of history, of morality, of theology. In the approximation to it he saw political and moral progress, and in the eternal realisation of it the life of God. As he grew older the difficulties of his position made themselves more felt; enthusiastic conviction gave place to polemical justification, and the joy of anticipated

attainment to the labour of preparatory detail. The fear of being misunderstood curbed his natural eloquence, and the consciousness of the unity of life receded under the pressure of special problems and the exigencies of exposition. With many of his natural allies, liberal politicians, religious enthusiasts, scientific investigators, he found that he could only go half the way. But under all these modifications the ideal of christian citizenship remained his ideal to the end; and in spite of frequent antagonism to the accredited representatives of physical science, he never relinquished his claim to be at one with the true scientific spirit.

While however it was undoubtedly this fundamental unity in his interests which made him the man he was, it would be a mistake to infer from what has been said that now or at any time he was in the habit of talking the language of religion or philosophy in his everyday life. On the contrary, he shrank almost to excess from seeming to be above ordinary people, or to take a high tone on ordinary questions. The impression which he left on outsiders was generally that of a shrewd, practical, and (in no invidious sense) secularly-minded man. The deeper sources of his conduct and opinions showed themselves for the most part in a diffused seriousness and farsightedness, and in an instinctive sympathy or antipathy for certain types of character and modes of speech; it was only in rare expressions, sometimes naive, sometimes humorous, that he betrayed any consciousness of living on a height. And even in intimate conversation it was characteristic of him to express his deeper thoughts with a half apology, and by

preference in the borrowed words of some favourite writer.

It is interesting to see how the leading ideas in his mind governed the treatment of an apparently alien material in his last piece of academic work, the essay on novels,[1] which gained the Chancellor's prize in 1862. The essay has also the additional interest of being almost the only record of his views on art and its relation to life. The fundamental conception upon which it is based is one with which we have already met. The world in its truth is a unity, governed by a single law, animated by an undivided life, a whole in every part. But to human apprehension it is fragmentary and mechanical, a chaos of elements of which each is external to the other and all are external to our minds, and in which chance tempered by familiarity seems to be the only law. To exceptional men, or at exceptional crises in life, in the moments of intense insight or emotion which philosophy calls knowledge and religion faith, the weight of custom falls away, the truth breaks through the veil, and the most trivial object or accident comes to reflect in itself the whole system of nature or the whole providence of God. At such moments man realises that in order to live he must die, that in order to be free he must obey, and that only by surrendering his fancied independence can he enter into the divine unity. To this liberation of the self from its own bondage art contributes its share. The poetic genius, like the speculative and the religious, penetrates the monotonous disorder of everyday life, and lays bare 'the impassioned expression' which is there for those

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 20.

who can read it. The dramatist, for instance, with whom the novelist is here compared, shows us some elemental force of humanity, stripped of the accidents of time and place, working itself out in free conflict with other forces, and finally breaking itself against the eternal fact that no man can gain the world without first losing himself. It is this catastrophe which makes the real tragedy of life; it is this which the tragic poet has the eye to see and the words to portray; and in proportion as we can follow him in imagination, we come away from the spectacle with our own hearts broken and purged, but strengthened to face the fact and obey the law.

The novelist does with inferior means, and for minds at a lower level, what the dramatist may do for a mind at its highest. He idealises enough to make us feel pleasure or pain, not enough to make us forget ourselves. He excites curiosity or suspense, not awe or hope. If the novel ends well, it flatters our complacency with the feeling that the world as it is is not such a bad place after all; if it ends badly, it strengthens the indolent conviction that aimless misery is the law of the universe. There are however two ways in which novels may be of real service and value. If they cannot teach men how to live, they may, through the wide range of their subjects, enable those who have already found a principle of life to give it a freer application than their limited circumstances would otherwise allow; the 'fictitious experience' may 'give expansion to the personal,' while the personal gives reality to the fictitious, and thus may be mitigated that 'sacrifice of the individual to society' which the modern division of labour tends to bring

about. And secondly, by appealing to such various classes and capacities, and exhibiting the identity of human nature under such various circumstances, novels supply a vehicle through which the force of public opinion may work, fusing differences, breaking down prejudices, and checking the 'despotism of situations.' The essay concludes characteristically with the refusal to believe that democracy is necessarily unpoetic. As 'we hold fast to the faith that the "cultivation of the masses," which has for the present superseded the development of the individual, will in its maturity produce some higher type of individual manhood than any which the old world has known,' so, though in the novel 'the creative faculty has taken a lower form than it held in the epic and the tragedy,' 'we may well believe that this temporary declension is preparatory to some higher development, when the poet shall idealise life without making abstraction of any of its elements, and when the secret of existence, which he now speaks to the inward ear of a few, may be proclaimed on the housetops to the common intelligence of mankind.'

Readers of the essay who are also novel-readers will be inclined to say that the writer was not much in sympathy with his subject; and he himself, on getting the prize, remarks that 'it is curious that I should have been successful in an essay on novels, about which I know and care little, and should have failed in both my efforts in theology, for which I care considerably.' At the same time it is probably true, as he once said, that he had read more novels than his friends gave him credit for, and it is certainly true that what his reading lacked in extent it made up

for in intensity. As might be supposed, his taste in fiction was for forcible delineation and robust humour. The flavour of strong, healthy individuality was what attracted him; for rarities, niceties, and abnormalities of mental organisation he cared nothing. He liked things which he could take hold of with his mind, not things which merely gave him sensations, pleasant or painful. Both in his deepest and his lightest moods he was absolutely simple and 'above board,' and this simplicity made him keenly alive to the proximity of the sublime to the ridiculous or the exquisite to the grotesque. Though he had little of the animal in him, and was never troubled by his appetites, he was quite free from prudery. If obscenity moved him at all, it was to frank laughter or to grim contempt; he never dwelt upon it, either in the way of enjoyment or loathing. 'For rules of ascetic discipline,' says a friend, 'he had no need. The view of life suggested by so much of the best French literature, that thinking men are generally in a practical dilemma between the extremes of sensual excess and of spiritual exaltation, did not commend itself to him in the least.'

The only forms of art to which he was keenly susceptible were those of oratory and poetry. He had no ear for music, though he seemed to get a certain exaltation from listening to it. In regard to painting and sculpture he always professed himself incompetent, but he was not without decided tastes. On his first visit to the continent he was more attracted by Rembrandt, Holbein, and Dürer than by the Italians; 'these men,' he said, 'grasped the idea of christianity.' Of Dürer's four saints at Munich he writes, 'I could contemplate them with interest for hours; he has

contrived to give St. John an almost perfect expression of "divine philosophy." ' In later years when he went to Italy he spent a good deal of time in looking at early Italian pictures, and admitted that they would soon have got a great hold upon him. But on the whole his attitude to the arts (excluding those of language) was one of deferential ignorance. He had not himself any artistic gifts; he did not even write verses. Yet to his friends, as one of them says, 'he never represented the prose of existence. With all his gravity, with all his firm grip on fact and material interests, he had the enthusiastic movement of the world's poetry in him.'

CHAPTER III

CHOICE OF A PROFESSION

THE period which follows the degree and fellowship at the university is often one of some uncertainty and embarrassment to gifted men who are not determined by choice or circumstances to any definite profession. Green had no taste for the bar; his political and religious ideas were neither of a sort which naturally leads to a career; and his interest in speculation was not combined with the impulse to communicate which would have made him eager to teach. Teaching however was the means most ready to his hand for getting a living, and to make himself independent was his strongest immediate motive. Jowett too exerted himself to keep him at Oxford. As soon as he had completed his examinations, and before he had been elected to a fellowship, he was asked to lecture at Balliol college on Greek history for the school of *literæ humaniores* and on English and early European history for the school of law and modern history. 'They are not,' he says, 'the subjects to which I should have wished to devote myself if my own inclination alone were concerned, but I did not hesitate to accept the appointment, for any certain employment is better than any uncertain.' His predecessor in the post was W. L. Newman, 'the

best lecturer I ever heard,' and this fact made him even more anxious than he would naturally have been. He seems however to have been very successful, especially with the Greek history, in which he felt a greater interest and for which he had a more intelligent and appreciative audience. Competent judges indeed think that he showed no less faculty for history than for philosophy; but there can be no doubt to which his own inclination led him. In October, 1861, Newman came back to the college, and except as his occasional substitute Green gave up lecturing on history. In the summer of 1861 he took some of Jowett's lectures, among others one on the Greek Testament; at the end of the year he was 'busy with Aristotle and kindred subjects,' and in October, 1863, he was lecturing on the *Ethics*, and finding it 'uphill work trying to expound Aristotle to men who are only just through "moderations," and void of the least tincture of philosophy.' Meantime he was supplementing this somewhat irregular work for the college by taking private pupils, at first in modern history and philosophy, then in philosophy alone. His success was not greater than his moderate exertions and interest in the work justified; the number of his pupils varied on the average from four to six, and only once rose to ten.

His letters during these three years show that he was not yet at peace with his surroundings. A constitutional 'tendency to chafe against necessary work,' fits of physical depression, and a sense of unfulfilled aspirations, combined with domestic anxieties to make Oxford distasteful. He fears that he will 'never experience that enjoyment of work of which

some people speak so strongly.' His lectures become 'more tedious' as they become 'more easy.' He is 'getting tired of coaching. At first it seemed to do me some good, but now I find that, while it takes up all my time and brings little money, it does nothing to improve the mind. After next term I think I shall give it up, for a time at least, and devote myself for a period to real study, away from Oxford. I daresay I shall never achieve much as a student, but as I don't see my way to the usefulness and satisfaction of other modes of life, the only course left is to study in earnest.' He is urged to be 'more genial and facile with undergraduates,' but he despairs of succeeding, for 'the breed is obnoxious' to him, and he thinks of seeking employment at the Owens college, Manchester, 'hoping to find it a more congenial atmosphere.' A few days after getting his fellowship he is 'beginning to feel a reaction; every success is followed by a certain depression, and a vague anticipation of nemesis.' In the summer of 1862 and the spring of 1863 he complains of sleeplessness, and 'a kind of oppression hangs over' him. In May, 1863, 'though far from depreciating, with the vulgar, a don's life,' yet he thinks it would 'do him good morally to have a break from Oxford for a time,' and is taking steps to obtain a school-inspectorship. A few days later he was offered, through Sir Alexander Grant, the editorship of the *Times of India*, then being started at Bombay, with a salary of 1,200*l.* a year. 'It would stir me up,' he thinks, 'and give me new experience. I might return to England in three or four years with an amount of money that I could hardly earn in ten years at home, and able to write

with authority on an important branch of politics.' But 'strong domestic objections, Jowett's opposition, and fears for health,' determined him to decline the offer, though with the feeling that 'it will very likely turn out to be the only chance I shall ever have of saving myself from being a stick for life.' 'Ultimately,' he writes soon after, 'there seem to be three courses open to me; (1) to persevere in Oxford life, after a temporary absence, with a bare possibility of one day getting a professorship, but with more probability of writing a heterodox book and becoming a dissenting preacher; (2) to get on the staff of a daily paper, and make 500*l.* a year by squeezing my brain into five leaders a week; (3) to get an educational appointment of some sort under government. The last course seems to me the most unworthy, the first least so, though it would require much resolution and involve celibacy.'

Such were the alternatives that presented themselves to him in June, 1863. Of that which he calls 'the most unworthy' he had shortly afterwards sufficient experience to convince him that it was unsatisfying. The attractions of the second were largely counterbalanced by the reflection that it 'would involve living in London and hanging about clubs, which of all things I should hate,' and except in an occasional letter to the papers he never sought this outlet for his opinions. The position of a minister of religion offered him a 'stump,' as he liked to call it, of a more congenial kind. But though he confesses once (1861) that 'a modified unitarianism suits me very well,' there is no record of his ever having seriously thought of joining that or any other nonconformist

body. Still less was he inclined to follow the advice, given to him as to other earnest young men at the time, to take orders in the established church. The only occasions on which such a step occurred to him as possible were when he paid visits to his uncle, the Rev. David Vaughan, whose character and work he regarded with enthusiastic admiration: but 'as soon,' he says, 'as I get out of the scope of such influence my repugnance returns.' His repugnance was no doubt partly to accepting formulas which he could not accept without compromising himself or misleading others; but it was still more that of a political and religious republican to the system of social and ecclesiastical privileges with which he associated the English establishment. He did, after some hesitation, bring himself to sign the thirty-nine articles in order to take the degree of M.A., and he did not sympathise with some of his contemporaries, who at considerable personal sacrifice definitely separated from the church; but his admiration for individual clergymen never quite overcame his antipathy to the anglican hierarchy. Thus in 1863, when there was a prospect that Stanley might be made archbishop of Dublin, he writes, 'I find it impossible to get up much interest in ecclesiastical affairs. The dead may bury their dead. Saving souls is one thing; making a fuss about an institution and a creed quite another.' And when Stanley exchanged the professorship of ecclesiastical history at Oxford for the deanery of Westminster, his comment was, 'He gives up a position in which he was doing great good, and was likely to do more, for one which may do him harm but in which he can scarcely do much good.' Yet, though in his youth he sometimes

indulged in sarcasms against dignitaries of the church from which in later years he studiously abstained, we find him also admitting that 'though I admire and agree with the leaders of the unorthodox, I do not like the tone and spirit of their following.' It was this equal dislike of an unspiritual ecclesiasticism on the one side and of a shallow secularism on the other, which made him look coldly on a proposal in 1861 to petition parliament in favour of abolishing clerical subscription; 'there are few men who could say that they desired more religious freedom *as christians*, and to petition for it as a sort of intellectual luxury would be simply to frighten the religious public and make them think that by opening the church door wider they would be letting in general scepticism. The opening of the church as well as of the universities ought to be agitated for politically, as a matter of justice to the poorer classes and dissenters. But as long as the present separation continues between radicals and men of education, I have little hope of this being done. Would that I were less slow of tongue!' It is clear, then, that his refusal to take orders was not due to any intellectual or moral paralysis, such as sometimes besets reflective men at his time of life. As a friend looking back at him says, 'in his religious convictions he was sound and heart-whole: of the *pain* of doubt, so far as I know, he felt very little. He seemed to have no need of any change except such as was naturally brought to him by the course of ordinary criticism; he advanced naturally from one point to another with no loss, by the way, of strength or of necessary equipment. His steadiness of mind was, in so speculative a man, quite remarkable;

he knew nothing of mental cataclysms, and had none of the qualities which make interesting converts.'

Other possible alternatives being excluded, that of teaching and writing remained, and as he came more and more to feel that he had a vocation for these, the dissatisfaction which had been weighing upon him gradually passed away. In March, 1864, he 'feels much less rebelliousness against Oxford work.' In October he 'finds his work here much more agreeable and satisfactory than he has hitherto done.' He had now ten private pupils, whom he took in a class as well as separately: thus he was 'obliged to prepare a regular discourse for them, which is stimulating and results in the accumulation of a good deal of material for a possible book *in futuro*.' The increasing consciousness of having something to say and the power to say it coincided with, and no doubt largely caused, this increased cheerfulness. Already in April, 1862, when his efforts to reclaim his elder brother from drinking had ended unsuccessfully, causing him great depression, he had written, 'as I have failed in the object that lay nearest me, I must be the more zealous about such general good as is to be done here. I want to form some regular plan for writing a book. It is the great thing, failing a profession, for preventing one from wasting time.' A year later he says, 'if I could get up the steam to write something that should be worth reading, I should be at better peace with myself. According to my experience, the only satisfaction to the inward man which lasts longer than a week arises from getting something adequate written.' By the end of 1863 he had begun two pieces of literary work, which, though neither of them was carried to

completion, contributed considerably in an indirect way to his mental growth. One was a translation of F. C. Baur's *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, the other was an edition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. To Baur he had probably been first introduced through Jowett's edition of Paul's epistles; 'I have found him,' he says, 'nearly the most instructive writer I ever met with.' The fragment of translation which remains,[1] embracing about a third of the first volume, is a masterly performance. His plan was 'to make a tolerably literal translation first, and then, when I have forgotten the German, translate my own translation, so to speak. So long as one has the German before one, it seems impossible to get the proper swing of English writing.'

'Swing' was a favourite word with him to describe the movement of native eloquence, and he would express his dissatisfaction with much contemporary English poetry by saying, with a characteristic gesture of the hand, 'There is no *swing* in it.' He was himself surprisingly susceptible to the effects of rhythmical and sonorous language; it was a genuine pleasure to him to declaim ballads such as *Kinmont Willie* and *Rosabelle*, and his sympathy with the minds of Milton and Burke was heightened by his enjoyment of their splendid rhetoric. But in his own writing the expansiveness of the rhetorician was fused with and dominated by the coherence of the thinker. 'He had a theory in composing,' says one of his friends, 'that all superfluous words should be extirpated, the fewest and most compressed used: that, if possible, an essay

[1] The first part of the book has since been translated in the *Theological Library*, published by Williams and Norgate.

should consist of one indivisible paragraph, the connected expression of a single proposition or a single syllogism.' Hence, while it is true of his style, as another friend says, that 'whenever the subject left the region of bare statement or analysis, there was always an underglow of subdued eloquence,' it was apt to strike less sympathetic readers as merely difficult, laborious, or clumsy. But whatever opinion may be formed of it, it had the essential quality without which nothing deserves the name of style; it was the man himself in words. Of all occupations writing was to him at once the hardest and the most absorbing; and because it was so hard and so absorbing, it gathered into itself more of his massive, struggling personality than any other kind of work.

The studies which suggested a translation of Baur's work were condensed into an essay on dogma,[1] which expresses clearly, though in somewhat Germanised phraseology, the speculative basis of his conception of christianity. The object of the essay is to determine the nature of dogma as a specific product and phase of the religious spirit. This it does by tracing the development of the particular dogmas which relate to the personality of Christ. It shows how the consciousness of a God in man has passed from its 'intuitive' form in Jesus of Nazareth, the 'historical' Christ, through various stages, partly of spiritualisation and expansion, partly of confusion and contraction, represented by the epistles of Paul, the fourth gospel, the fathers, the councils, scholastic philosophy, and protestant theology, until it attains the 'ideal' form of the 'philosophical' Christ, the divine unity

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 161.

embodied in nature and humanity. The point upon which the whole argument converges is, that the end of this development is the truth and fulfilment of the beginning. The primitive historical 'fact' does not evaporate in the ultimate 'idea,' nor is the idea a merely glorified reproduction of the fact; the idea *is* the fact in its full significance. Jesus of Nazareth was God and man, not because his physical birth and death took place under conditions impossible to the normal human organisation, but on the contrary because, having the normal human organisation in its entirety, he realised in and through it his absolute union with God, and became in actual fact what all men have it in them potentially to become. This divinisation of humanity, this 'incarnation,' took place in him at a certain time and place, under special historical conditions, which the gospel narrative enables us partially, but only partially, to reconstruct. The incarnation is not completed, the truth which Jesus proclaimed is not fully revealed, until the whole of mankind and the whole of nature become a perfect vehicle for the life which lived in him. Such a personality, human and divine, natural and spiritual, the concentrated self-consciousness of all the laws of nature and all the aspirations of mankind, is the 'ideal' Christ, the eternally 'self-objectifying' God. In the gradual education of the human race, in the growing mastery of the 'art of living,' this eternal personality reveals itself in time. It is because Jesus, under limiting conditions, lived a life which is limited by no conditions, and under special circumstances proclaimed a principle which is applicable to all circumstances, that his life and his principle are rightly

called 'absolute.' But only in the life of God is their absoluteness an actual fact; to mankind it remains an ideal, an infinite possibility, slowly working itself out in ever-widening circles of human society.

The conception of christianity developed in this essay is only a completer form of what the writer had already indicated elsewhere. The sum of his utterances on the subject is inconsiderable in bulk, but it focussed more intensely than any other both his speculative activity and his moral enthusiasm. The principle which he so early assimilated and on which he was never tired of insisting, that the energy of reason is the ultimate and underivable reality, found here its deepest application. In the living consciousness of union with God he saw the highest effort of human genius; the highest, because it alone has power to transform the whole man, to mould all circumstances, to work through every organ. To such a consciousness there is no 'miracle' and no 'mystery'; it cannot seek to transcend the laws of nature, for it knows them to be its own laws; it need not fear to open its eyes wide to the light, for wherever it looks it knows that it will find the face of a friend.

The preparation for an edition of Aristotle's *Ethics* had no immediate result, though it must have furnished much material for subsequent lectures. He had been occupying himself with Aristotle for some time past, and had formed a project for editing the treatise *De Anima*. But the great expectations which he had formed of its value and fruitfulness seem to have been disappointed on a closer acquaintance, and a translation of portions, amounting to somewhat more than half the work, was all that he

accomplished. The edition of the *Ethics* was undertaken in conjunction with Edward Caird; it was originally intended to be one of a series of books published by the University Press for use in the university examinations, but this arrangement fell through, and ultimately the work was abandoned. The publication in 1866 of an edition of the same book by Sir Alexander Grant was the occasion of his writing an article in the *North British Review* on the philosophy of Aristotle.[1] In this article he applies certain principles, arrived at by a study of Kant and Hegel, to the twofold task of recovering the truth, and pointing out the error, which he conceived to lie in Aristotle's metaphysical principles. He maintains that 'we may distinguish two really inconsistent theories of knowledge running through Greek philosophy, each of which arrives at its most complete formulation in Aristotle, though in him they are still so blended as to present constant contradictions throughout his writings.' The root of this inconsistency is found in the fact that he was not thoroughgoing with his 'idealism,' but allowed his conception of reality as the work of intelligence to be crossed by a 'dualism' which leaves something real and yet unintelligible. Hence the want of adjustment both between his logic and his metaphysic and between different parts of the metaphysic itself, the effect of which is that the logic lived but did not develop, while the deepest ideas of the metaphysic remained mere suggestions. Some students of Aristotle will probably think that the flaws thus criticised arise, not from confusion or weakness of thought, but from

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 46.

the want of system either in the original exposition or in the form in which his works have survived. They will prefer to regard his glaringly inconsistent statements rather as rough-hewn stones awaiting an architect, than as irreconcilable pieces of an ostensibly finished structure. From a biographical point of view the most interesting passages in the essay are those in which the personal convictions of the writer come to the surface. The conceptions of a 'distinguishing and unifying self' which 'makes the sensitive organs its vehicle,' and of 'the elements of the intelligible world' as being 'determinations of a creative spirit, which reflects itself in things,' have already been made familiar to us. In the reference to God as 'realising himself in the particularities of nature and man's moral life'; in the description of man as ready 'to draw up ideal truth from the deep or bring it down from heaven,' but unable to 'believe that it is within and around him'; and in the parallel drawn between 'sin' as the substitution of the finite for the infinite self and 'intellectual error' as the taking a partially known for a wholly known object, we see how the principles which guided him in the essays on novels and on dogma followed him into metaphysic.

In 1864 the chair of moral philosophy in the university of St. Andrews became vacant by the death of J. F. Ferrier, and Green determined to compete for it. In writing to his father, whom he expected to look unfavourably on the step, he says, 'knowing my own aspirations and capacities, I feel pretty sure that it would be good for me to get it. I feel that, if I have a vocation, it lies in the professorial line,

and in the special professorial line which this appointment would open to me.' The process of candidature half amused and half annoyed him; 'I find that in order to give oneself a fair chance, all sorts of private agencies have to be set to work. These appointments seem to be regarded with great interest in Scotland, and to be matters of discussion among the "educated classes." The electors are anxious to appoint the best man, but are a good deal influenced by public opinion on the subject, and by what they hear from people of consideration. Accordingly one has to get favourable reports of oneself into circulation, and also to obtain good words from influential people.' Among other things he writes to his sister that 'the St. Andrew's professors have been told that, though not a monster in other respects, I carry Comtism and materialism to a degree hitherto unknown at Oxford. Happily you are ignorant about these 'isms, but they are a most unfortunate selection. Some heresies I might justly have been charged with, but against these I have been declaiming in a humble way for the last six years.' He had many friends and supporters in Scotland, and very strong testimonials from the most competent judges in Oxford; but the chair was given, not to Spencer Baynes whom he had considered his most formidable competitor, but to Robert Flint. He was rather downcast at first, but in three days had recovered his spirits, and two months afterwards he could say that he believed himself 'to have done more for his pupils, and got more from them in the way of his own intellectual and pecuniary profit, than in any previous term.'

The long vacations of 1862 and 1863 were partly

spent with friends in Switzerland and Germany. The simplicity of life in these countries had a special charm for him. 'I well remember,' says one of his fellow-travellers, 'the glow with which he greeted Swiss and German peasants, delighting in their homely patriarchal ways, their care for animals, the pious legends carved upon their chalets, the primitive love-making of their young men and maidens.' On his first visit in 1862 to Dresden, where he stayed at the pension Kretschmer, well known to Oxford men, he writes, 'I am very well here, and like the place and the people. Indeed if I had my choice and knew the language, I should be disposed to settle in Germany in preference to England. The social equality, and the apparent absence of vice and distress, relieve one's soul from many burdens, and personally I don't much mind about the stagnation. Some people might be annoyed by the unquestionable and universal ugliness of the women, but to make up for this they seem much more sensible, and more companionable for the men.' In the following year he was at Heidelberg, very apprehensive about the prospects of Germany, where Bismarck's ordinance against the press had 'shorn the liberal papers of leading articles.' Yet he has 'confidence in the future of Prussia, for the soldiers can all read, and the artisans (who are strong at Berlin, though I fear not elsewhere) seem to be free from the worse forms of socialism, and under the guidance of Schulze-Delitsch to be developing schemes of co-operation and self-help.' As to the Polish question, which he finds all-absorbing to the Heidelbergers, he confesses, 'I don't seem to see my way in it one bit, and therefore cannot get up

much interest in it. I shall be very sorry if a *furore* is got up in England for Polish independence, which I take to be an impossibility, though the cry for it may be turned to account by France.' On the same grounds he was glad when Garibaldi's visit to England in 1864 came to an end; he 'did not want the English to get excited about the Danish and Polish questions, which they don't understand.' The course which events took in Italy in the autumn of 1860 had made him 'very gloomy'; 'Garibaldi is evidently not strong enough to take at all a high tone, and thus I fear the Mazzinian or federal program, which I have no doubt is really the best, will have to give way, for want of public virtue, to Cavour's. I can't think that a Piedmontese king of all Italy, without federal limitations, would ever be trustworthy, or that Italy can ever be permanently safe with Rome and Venetia in the hands of foreigners. But of course there is no good in attempting plans which there is not enough national spirit to carry out. The southern Italians are clearly a feeble folk.' In February, 1861, he 'delivered a longish address at the Union in vindication of Mazzini, which was better received than my addresses used generally to be.'

But the political event of these years which dwarfed all others in his view was the war of secession in America, in which he fervidly espoused the cause of the northern states. Almost immediately after the outbreak of hostilities he writes to his sister, 'I should be sorry to have you believe the nonsense which the *Times* writes about the most important struggle that the world has seen since the French Revolution.' The seizure of the Confederate commissioners on

board the 'Trent,' and the possibility of a rupture with the North, caused him the greatest anxiety; 'a war with them would make England a wretched country to live in for the term of our lives at least'; 'I trust a good deal to the religious public to keep us out of war; the leading dissenters I see are preaching peace vigorously.' 'It is a great thing,' as he wrote afterwards in 1865 in connexion with Jamaica and Governor Eyre, 'when the religious public, as seldom happens, really gets stirred up in the right direction.' At the end of 1862 5,000*l.* was raised in Oxford for the relief of the distress caused by the war in Lancashire, and 400*l.* came from Balliol; he speaks of himself as greatly 'refreshed' by the sympathy shown for the North by his brother-fellow Newman, and believes that 'in spite of our toryism here, there are more people sound on that point in Oxford than are to be found among the same number anywhere else in England.' In March, 1863, he is suffering from sleeplessness, perhaps brought on by 'a vehement speech which I made to the Union about American affairs late one evening. It is some satisfaction to know that it was successful, and actually made converts.' Two passages in this speech became memorable among his friends, one of grim humour, the other of fierce invective. The advocates of the South had urged that the Northerners were the aggressors in the war, and that republican institutions were to blame for it. In answer to the first argument he told the story of the rustic who received a ferocious dog on the points of his pitchfork, and, on being remonstrated with for not having used the other end, replied, 'I would have done, if the dog had come

at me with the other end.' To the second he retorted, 'It is not a republic that is answerable for this war, but a slave-holding, slave-breeding, and slave-burning oligarchy, on whom the curse of God and humanity rests.' His own view of the situation he found expressed in various utterances of Goldwin Smith with a force and eloquence which he admired and envied. All his instinctive antipathy to war vanished before his conviction of the great issues at stake, and he followed the details of each campaign with the ardour of a citizen-soldier and the prescience of a strategist. His enthusiasm gives an unwonted glow to his account of a meeting at Oxford with the American general Barlow, who had 'commanded a division in Hancock's corps (the fighting corps), and surprised the Confederate left in the mist of the morning at Spotsylvania Court House, and captured 5,000 men and eighteen guns. He is only twenty-seven, quite beardless, and looks like a grim boy. I hate ornamental officers, but the sight of a man who can command soldiers in a great war for a good cause brings back the sentiment with which I used to read the life of Nelson when I was a boy.' The assassination of Lincoln came on him like a personal shock; 'it is a fitting consummation of the greatest political crime of modern times. I wish I could think that no responsibility for it rested with English talkers and newspaper writers. They have been calling Lincoln "a bloodthirsty tyrant" every day for some years.' The prevailing judgment of educated English opinion upon the American question remained in his mind as the crying proof of its shallowness. 'The

fabric of European society,' he wrote in 1868, 'stands apparently square and strong on a basis of decent actual equity, but no adequate rationale of this equity is generally recognised. The hedonism of Hume has been turned into utilitarianism, the jacobinism of Rousseau into a gentle liberalism, but neither *ism* could save the "culture" of England, in the great struggle between wilfulness and social right across the Atlantic, from taking sides with the wilfulness. Whatever might be the case practically, it had not learnt speculatively that freedom means something else than doing what one likes. A philosophy based on feeling was still playing the anarch in its thoughts.'[1]

In English politics at this period he could not find much ground for satisfaction. He rejoiced over the repeal of the paper duty in 1860; 'it is just what is wanted to secure the position of the penny papers and destroy the despotism of the *Times*'; and in the same year he comforts himself with 'the sure prospect of Gladstone's becoming a radical. He, Bright, and Cobden will form a fine triumvirate to lead the people's cause.' But at the end of 1861 he speaks bitterly of 'the temper which makes people rejoice in the "failure of American democracy," and makes them play at soldiers instead of agitating for reform bills.' The occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Wales leads him to reflect 'how much these festivities do to degrade the people. I take it this one royal wedding postpones the chance of real reform a decade or more.'

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 117.

Of Gladstone's declaration in 1864 in favour of extending the franchise he says, it 'has carried joy to the hearts of all earnest liberals'; but the next year he is afraid that the ministry, though 'the best we have ever had,' is 'too good to last; a government with a conscience in the present state of political lassitude is likely to have a hard time.'

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOLS ENQUIRY COMMISSION—VIEWS ON EDUCATION

In December, 1864, a royal commission was appointed to enquire into the education given in those schools in England and Wales which were not comprised within the two former commissions of 1858 and 1861, that is, practically, 'the schools attended by the children of such of the gentry, clergy, professional and commercial men as are of limited means, and of farmers and tradesmen.'[1] The commissioners conducted their enquiry partly by examining witnesses, partly by sending circulars of questions to the schools, and partly by appointing assistant commissioners to inspect personally certain representative districts of England and Wales. One of these assistant commissionerships, with a salary of 50*l.* a month and hotel and travelling expenses, was offered to Green, and he accepted it. He was a good deal surprised to learn through Dr. Temple, who was one of the commissioners and obtained the place for him, that his appointment caused some alarm to other members of the commission; they had heard that he was 'an extreme man, an ultra-radica in politics, an ultra-liberal in religious opinion.' 'This' (he says) 'vexed me a good deal when I first heard it. In the first place I am not an "ultra-liberal in religious

[1] *Instructions to assistant commissioners.*

opinion" in the ordinary sense of the words, and secondly, I have always prided myself on reserve in the expression of my opinions, not with a view to preferment, but from aversion to revolutionary notoriety. That the commissioners should know anything about them shows in what an inquisitorial age we live.' It is hardly necessary to say that if he had any tendencies in him justifying these apprehensions, they were conscientiously repressed during the execution of his office.

The selected district which fell to his lot was Warwickshire and Staffordshire; and when subsequently the commissioners resolved to extend the enquiry to all endowed grammar schools in England and Wales, his share of this supplementary work was the counties of Buckingham, Leicester, and Northampton. Altogether he was occupied during the last three quarters of 1865 and from April to June, 1866. In Warwickshire and Staffordshire his instructions were 'to institute a personal inspection of the endowed, proprietary, and private schools for boys and girls; to test the attainments of the scholars by actual examination; to ascertain as far as possible the wishes and opinions of the parents respecting the education of their children, and thus to obtain as complete a view as the time admitted of the demand for education in this section of the community, and of the extent to which this demand is supplied.' He further had to make a special report on King Edward's school at Birmingham, one of the eight endowments selected by the commission for their size and importance to serve as examples, whether for imitation or avoidance, to similar schools throughout the country.

His general plan of operations was 'to begin by spending an afternoon with the master, making out the general arrangements of the school. Then, having conciliated him as much as possible, and found out what the school-work will be on a given day, I go over again on that day, and spend it in school. Afterwards, if need be, I call on trustees or parents.' His official report was not printed until 1868.[1] The deep interest which he took in the subject, its intrinsic importance, and the fact that blue books are so little generally read, justify the insertion of some extracts.

His first headquarters were at Birmingham, and though at starting he had some difficulties, his friendly reception there answered to the favourable predispositions with which he came to the constituency of John Bright. After a month's experience he writes, 'I hope to get through my present work with decent energy and effort, and it will do me some good no doubt, but I have no real taste for "practical life." I shall go back to Oxford work, let us hope, with more contentment from having tried other work and found it wanting. The worst of my present position is its indefiniteness. I am haunted with a feeling that I ought to be finding something out which I am not finding out. Then there is the knowledge that one must fall foul of certain people. Some people here profess displeasure with the want of publicity in my enquiries, and the other day for the first time in my life I was made the subject of a leading article in a local paper, the drift of which was the unsatisfactory nature of private enquiries. There was nothing to complain of in it, and now I have made friends with most of the newspaper-writers,

[1] His general report is in vol. viii. of the *Schools Inquiry Commission*.

so that for the future I hope to be let alone. It was rather embarrassing at first to have to poke into back-shops and small manufactories (such as abound here), and explain to parents and old pupils of the school what one was about. Now I don't mind it much.'

It must be remembered that at this time he was, to use his own words,[1] 'looking forward in common with many of those with whom he associated at Oxford to a reconstitution, at no very distant time, of the middle and higher education, and, if not to a reconstitution of society through that of education, yet at least to a considerable change in its tone and to the removal of many of its barriers.' The hope of these young reformers was to enable the universities to draw from a new stratum of the population of England, and to put a stop to a state of things in which 'what we call the higher education is in effect only open to those with whom it is a matter of social requirement and expectation.'[2] In the same spirit we have already[3] heard him demanding that the opening of the universities should be 'agitated for politically, as a matter of justice to the poorer classes and dissenters,' and lamenting 'the separation between radicals and men of education' which prevented this from being done. It is not therefore surprising if, in spite of some repugnance to the actual work of inspection and sense of unfitness for it, he applied himself to it with a keenness of interest and a breadth of view which have left their mark upon almost every page of his report.

The gross annual income from endowments of the grammar schools of Staffordshire and Warwickshire (not including Birmingham) he found to be nearly

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 387. [2] *Ib.* p. 392. [3] Above, p. 44.

9,500*l.* Of the boys on whose education this sum was expended there were less than a hundred 'who, with any amount of time allowed, and with unlimited use of the dictionary, would make out for themselves with decent correctness an ordinary passage of Cicero or Virgil.' Of these 'not more than thirty could be expected to rise considerably beyond their present standard of attainment; and of these thirty, again, not more than half would be likely to find their way to any university.' About twelve boys were reading mathematics above Euclid and elementary algebra, about ten showed 'an intelligent interest in English literature and a knowledge of history that would be likely to continue with them,' and twenty at most could translate for themselves a passage of ordinary French.

In looking for a remedy for this state of things, he came emphatically to the conclusion that it 'is *not* to be found either in a radical change of the subjects of instruction, or in new methods of teaching as distinct from a greater general effectiveness on the part of the teachers. It is most important to notice that the boys in these grammar schools, even the select ninety-seven, have not reached the stage at which the controversy of systems (e.g. between classical and other methods of education, and between the English and continental systems of teaching classics) can rationally be raised. When a boy has got that acquaintance with grammatical forms, without which he cannot speak or write any language, even his own, with more than accidental correctness; when he has learnt to appreciate other distinctions than those which can be directly seen, and smelt, and handled;

when he has learnt the difference between the word that first occurs to him and the right word; then a serious question arises as to the parts which the acquisition of positive knowledge and of skill in the use of words should severally fill in his education. The grammar school boy, however, nearly always disposes of the question by leaving school as soon as (often before) he has received the preliminary mental training without which neither real knowledge nor literary skill can be acquired at all.' Thus 'the primary question is, how boys of the sort frequenting the lesser grammar schools can be brought in larger numbers and at an earlier age to the level which is now only attained by the highest class at the best of them, and at which liberal education can first be said properly to begin.' This result is not to be attained by substituting for Latin 'modern' subjects, such as English grammar and literature, history and geography, modern foreign languages, or physical science. 'To that class of parents which forms the main constituency of the grammar schools, the shopkeepers and small manufacturers, the "modern" subjects are matters of equal indifference with the classical. What they want for their sons is an education which will qualify them for business (i.e. which will enable them to read, write, do accounts, and compose an ordinary letter) in the most compendious possible way. . . . The great check on aspiration towards the university at present is the prevalent notion that education should be an easy and agreeable process, which will qualify the recipient for making money at fifteen. This notion the adoption of the "modern" system would sanction and enthrone. . . . The real

difficulties which have to be met on the part of the taught, are an absence of intellectual interest, an incapacity for intellectual effort, and an obtuseness for distinctions of thought. If the proposed "modern" curriculum appealed to the same intellectual interest, it would meet with the same passive resistance as the present; if it did not, to adopt it would be not to overcome existing difficulties, but to acquiesce in them.'

If then we would find the real reasons why the grammar schools are doing so little for liberal education, we must go outside the matter and method of the instruction which they give. And firstly, why do so few promising boys go to them? One reason is to be found in the frequent badness or unsuitableness of their buildings, playgrounds, and situations. Another is the fact that the head-masters, besides often having other employments than that of teaching, have little motive, pecuniary or other, to push their schools or make them useful to the neighbourhood. They are consequently 'apt needlessly to trample on the notions of education current among the commercial class,' not seeing that, when once they have got hold of a promising boy, they may with a little management teach him almost what they like, provided that they make him a competent writer and reckoner. But the strongest reasons are to be found in the opinions and sentiments of the parents to whom the grammar schools should naturally appeal. First and foremost there is the general preference for large boarding schools, common both to professional and commercial men. This is due partly to the want of leisure, capacity, or interest, which prevents so many men of business

from attending personally to the education of their children; partly to the success with which such schools develop the 'conventional character of the English gentleman'; 'they foster an early susceptibility to the club-law of honour; form habits of ready address towards equals and of contempt towards "those that are without;" lead to the concealment, if not to the suppression, of egotism and conceit in ordinary companionship; and by their organisation of games develop a muscular bearing suitable to such a temper.' The smaller grammar schools, again, in attempting to satisfy the special educational requirements both of the professional and the commercial class, generally fail to satisfy either. The lowness of the average intellectual standard of the boys who attend them prevents the master from giving the necessary attention to the few who might go to the universities, while yet he cannot compete with the private 'academies' which can throw their undivided strength into commercial subjects. As a rule the funds are not sufficient to keep up both kinds of education to a good standard; but even where they are, it is scarcely ever possible to adapt the system of teaching to both requirements. If the plan of alternative studies be pursued, and boys are exempted for instance from Greek that they may give more time to modern languages or history, 'it is found, according to the uniform testimony of schoolmasters, that they make hardly any additional progress in the subjects to which extra time is given, while they lose ground both in general intelligence and in habits of application. This is due partly to the intellectual slackness which results from the consciousness of having given up

the hardest subjects, but mainly to the fact that the exceptional studies cannot be pursued under adequate supervision from the higher masters.' The plan of having separate departments, as generally worked, is still worse. The separation becomes social, not educational; it means 'that those parents who wish their boys merely to learn just enough to act as clerks, or serve in a shop, place them in the commercial department, while those who wish them to learn a little Latin and mathematics, or possibly Greek, place them in the classical, without any reference in either case to the amount of knowledge which a boy possesses on entrance. I never met with a school where a system of transfer from the commercial department to the classical was effectively worked.' Lastly, the farmers have the aversion to grammar schools which is natural to a class who 'make a practice of keeping their sons at home and in ignorance till they are twelve or thirteen, and then want them to learn to write and keep accounts with the least amount of trouble and discipline. On the other hand, the fascinations of the private schoolmaster seem to take a special hold on the mind of the farmer.' The private schoolmaster 'touts for boys as a commercial traveller for orders. If his connexion lies with the farmers, he commonly goes round in a gig on a holiday afternoon, calls at the houses of parents who have sent him boys already, and gets leave to carry off any stray son that he finds hanging about at home, whose clothes are sent after him on the following market-day. He promises to give each boy a "practical education" of the exact kind he wants, makes a great fuss about "individual attention," and has

to pay for his professions by submission to irritating interference from the parents, not so much in the way of regulating the boy's studies, for which they are generally too ignorant, as of withdrawing him fitfully from instruction altogether. No one who has observed the difficulties in which the private commercial schoolmaster is placed from inability to hold his own against parents and pupils, can doubt the possible utility of endowments in face of the present standard of intelligence on educational matters among the people on whom such a master depends. But the present effect of the endowment is often to prevent the master from making the grammar school as popular as it might be made without any sacrifice of principle.'

Such are the chief reasons which keep boys away from the grammar schools; there are others which prevent those who go to them from getting much good from them. The most serious is the want of intellectual stimulus in most of their homes. 'The difference between the educational standard of the professional class generally and the commercial class generally forces itself strongly on any one conversant with provincial life. The explanation of it is to be found in the simple fact that while the education of the commercial man has stopped at the age of fifteen, that of the professional man (setting aside the lower stratum of attorneys and apothecaries) was continued from three to eight years longer. The difference in amount of education which this implies between the parents of the two classes, must be conceived of as increasing in geometrical ratio if we are to appreciate the difference of educational impulse which they

severally apply to their children. In the one case there are no books (except a few with gilt leaves, only moved to be dusted), no intellectual traditions, small opportunities of study at home. The father probably spends the evening with his friends at some place of social resort; the mother is tired with household cares, and if she had the will, has not often sufficient elementary knowledge to overlook even the studies of a small boy. The entire education of the son, therefore, has to be done in school. He goes there unable to read or speak correctly; as he grows older, he reads nothing for himself to quicken the unconscious perception of analogies on which good scholarship depends; nor does any gentle pedagogue at home supply the absence of the schoolmaster in the evening. There is nothing future to stimulate his intellectual ambition. The possibility of an education at the university never entered the horizon of the family imagination, nor has he ever heard anyone commended for knowledge or literary ability. The son of a professional man, on the other hand, learns his own language, it is to be hoped, in the nursery. He is early accustomed to the sight and use of books. There are those about him at home, who, if they like, can see that he does at home what his master sets him, and as he grows older, familiar example may accustom him to the notion of knowledge as a source of utility and estimation. Such general statements must be taken with due abatement for individual exceptions. They would be accepted by masters of grammar schools with a readiness which, as these gentlemen are generally dissatisfied with their position, may be thought somewhat deceptive. They are confirmed,

however, by my own observation of the general inferiority of the work done by the day-boys of grammar schools at home to that done under the master's eye; by the increasing difficulty of getting lessons learnt at home as the subjects become higher; by the fact that the use of an expression or illustration which would be familiar to boys bred among books or educated people, is often received by a grammar-school class with a stare; by the common inability of the upper boys in these schools to write simple English correctly; and by my general experience (to which there are some noticeable exceptions) that the only boys in them who have attained the elements of scholarship are the few of professional parentage.'

Another reason which lowers the standard of the grammar schools is the elementary ignorance of their lower classes. The education which these are receiving is generally 'the same in kind as that given in the national schools, but under a different name, and (on the whole) to a different grade of boys, while in all other but their highest classes they are giving the same education as the cheap private schools, and to boys in the same rank of life.' Thus, while 'the few boys of promise are kept back by the dead weight of ignorance in the lower classes, and by want of competition when they reach the upper, the mass, owing to the waste of some years, which might have been given to elementary learning before entry to the grammar school, lose all chance of availing themselves of the higher education which the grammar school has to give.' Most of them leave when they have got half-way up the school, and this means that 'when they reach the age at which they are fit for business,

they have only learnt to read, write, and do accounts, with enough Latin to make them think it a nuisance.'

'The means of reconciling the opposite wants of classical and commercial education are to be found, I believe, (1) in the exaction of a larger amount of elementary knowledge at entrance to the grammar schools than is now required at the best; (2) in such a postponement of Greek as would render it possible, without trenching on the time given to Latin, to secure that the average boy should be perfect in arithmetic and able to write English correctly by the age of fourteen at latest. . . . The words "arithmetic" and "Latin" should be graven on the heart of every grammar-school master. The one represents the primary condition of popularity with the commercial class; the other the wicket-gate through which must pass every boy, not endowed with special gifts or the subject of some uncovenanted mercies, who is to attain an appreciation of anything high and remote in the intellectual world.' If these principles were acted on, and the money now spent in giving gratuitously an education which could be better provided in elementary schools, were saved for the purposes for which it was intended, it would be possible to establish 'a well-organised system, by which the poorer grammar schools should pass on their best boys with small exhibitions to the richer, and these again should transfer their *élite* with larger exhibitions to the university.' The latter or 'high' schools ought to have two departments, one preparing for the universities, the other devoted mainly to mathematics, physical science, and modern languages. Their existence would 'make it possible to simplify the work of the smaller grammar

schools, and remove the occasion for the mischievous separation into classical and commercial departments. It would be understood that the higher classical education was not to be attempted by the smaller schools; that they were to concentrate attention on English writing, arithmetic, Latin, and Euclid, with French in the higher classes, and that further classical or scientific education would be furnished elsewhere to such as were fit for it. . . . The high school might offer to the smaller schools the stimulus in the way of reward which they now lack, by instituting a severe entrance examination in the subjects which it is thought desirable for the latter to cultivate, and awarding exhibitions tenable at the schools to those who did best in it.'

Such a system 'would at once meet the aspiration of the few and raise that of the many. It would spread its net to catch boys who want a commercial education, and having caught them, while it gave them what they wanted, would, by a process of natural selection, keep for the higher learning all who were fit for it. It would bring every boy of capacity by the age of fourteen or so in contact with the mind of a scholar, and familiarise him with the prospect of an intellectual career. It would find parents amongst the poorer clergy, dissenting ministers, and the better sort of private and government schoolmasters, few in number but the salt of their class, who would be eager to avail themselves of it, and once inaugurated, it would, by its own operation, perpetually augment this class. Not only would it by degrees create a taste for the pursuit of science and literature in our large towns (where there might be plenty of leisure

for it if only there were the will); it would constantly be increasing the demand for schoolmasters of high university degree, and thus be giving to the scholastic career more of the material encouragement which it at present lacks. If it is desired fairly to get rid of the notion ingrained in the mind of the commercial class, that high education is the perquisite of the clergy and gentry, this is the way to do it.'

The views here expressed were to a great extent those which the commissioners adopted in their report of 1868,[1] but they were not carried out in the way which Green had hoped for. Eleven years later, in a lecture delivered before the Birmingham Teachers' Association,[2] we find him complaining that the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 had 'made no provision, as the original commission recommended, for the establishment of provincial authorities having power to deal with schools in groups. . . . Without this their plan for grading schools could not be realised, and the attempt to realise it tended rather to mischief than otherwise. Each school has had to be dealt with by the executive commission separately. Except in one or two cases, there has been no agency which they could bring to bear for establishing any vital connexion between one and another. They have been able to frame schemes making one school first grade, another second grade, another third; but these terms, which represent a valuable reality when the school of lower grade can be made to feed the higher, are apt to imply merely a harassing limitation upon the subjects of instruction, when each school, instead of being one

[1] *Schools Inquiry Commission*, vol. i. [2] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 388.

member of an organism, has to act as an independent whole.'

Besides this failure on the part of parliament to carry out the recommendation of the commission of enquiry, he also thought that the commission itself had erred in proposing to apply so large a proportion of endowments to the establishment of first-grade boarding schools, of which they contemplated eighty. Considering the educational traditions of the English middle class, and in the absence of provincial authorities who could secure by carefully regulated entrance examinations a real connexion between these first-grade schools and those below them, he could not believe that they would 'do very much towards raising to the higher learning those who do not now come within reach of it. They would be patronised by those parents, a large and growing class, who desire that their sons should have "the advantages of a public school education" at a somewhat cheaper rate than that at which Rugby or Clifton supply them, but who have the vaguest idea of what they mean by these advantages. Drawing on such a class and conducted by men trained in the traditions of such schools, they would continue the old system, well suited to those who go on to the university, and not altogether ill suited to those who without doing so remain at school till past eighteen, while in fact only a very small fraction of their pupils would go to the university, and the majority would leave for offices or counting-houses under seventeen. They will thus for the most part be educating second-grade boys on first-grade principles. The boys in them will only differ in respect of the social aspirations of their

parents from those for whom, with a view to their destination and the age at which they leave school, the commissioners recommend the second-grade curriculum.' [1]

It was rather to the increase of first-grade day schools in large towns that he looked for the development of higher education in England. 'It is scarcely among the most prosperous of the middle class that the needful sentiment in favour of liberal education is likely to develop itself most quickly and fruitfully. The attractions of early money-getting are not friendly to it, and where these attractions are strongest, though there may often be a decided wish for the "education of a gentleman," a wish which will find its satisfaction in a more or less costly boarding school, there will be little of the instinct which leads to the prolonged pursuit of literature or science. It will more often be found among those who, while feeling the intellectual stimulus which the life of a large town supplies, find no very tempting openings into the life of prosperous commerce. Among such men there has long been a demand, I believe, for a higher education than under the *régime* of unreformed grammar schools there was much chance of satisfying, and of late years with the growth of libraries and literary institutions in the larger towns it has made rapid progress. The day school must always be much better fitted than the boarding school both to meet and expand it.' [2]

The plan of middle-class education which he proceeds to sketch [3] is substantially that which he had suggested in 1865 in his report on King Edward's schools at Birmingham. When the new scheme for

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 400. [2] *Ib.* p. 408. [3] *Ib.* p. 411.

those schools came into operation, he was elected as the teachers' representative on their governing body, and continued until his death to take an active part in their proceedings. 'There were two questions,' the headmaster writes, 'on which he took a decided line and rendered conspicuous service during his too short connexion with the school; these were the grading of the schools of the foundation, and the improvement of the position of the masters and mistresses. It was on the lines laid down in his lecture on the subject of grading that our schools were remodelled under the new scheme which came into force in 1878; but very soon afterwards it became evident that, in consequence of the great improvement in the public elementary schools, there was no longer room for schools of three grades above them, and in 1880–81 a further change was made, by which our lower middle and middle schools were fused into what are now known as the grammar schools of the foundation. In this work Professor Green, Dr. Harper (who represented the university of Oxford on the board), and the Rev. R. W. Dale (the representative of the university of London) took the lead, and it was mainly by their influence and educational experience that it was carried out. They chose the sites of the new schools and marked out the lines on which they were to be constituted. Professor Green did not live to see these schools at work, but their success has fully justified the wisdom of his plans. In the report which he made as assistant commissioner, he had written very strongly of the inadequate remuneration of the assistant masters of the Birmingham schools. Something had already been done to remedy this

defect, but it was not till he became a governor that the whole question was fully and fairly dealt with, and the improved position which the staff has since enjoyed is mainly due to his firmness and tact. In this matter also, and indeed in all that concerned the school, Dr. Harper worked with him. Professor Green's influence on the governing body was very remarkable. Some people in Birmingham were at first disposed to regard with suspicion and jealousy the intrusion, as it was deemed, of the representative governors, most of them residents at a distance; but such feelings were soon disarmed by his ready perception of local wants, his unwearied attention to his duties, and, above all, his personal worth and goodness.'

It must strike anyone who reads his lectures on education and his report, that while as a matter of fact his teaching power was almost entirely spent in a university, his strongest sympathies were with the education of the middle classes, whom the universities were only just beginning to touch. An undercurrent of indignant pity for the intellectual condition of these classes pervades his writings. He is oppressed with 'the monotonous level of commercial intelligence,' and with the conviction that 'only by a special grace can anyone bred amid the keen interests, the obvious profits, the quick returns of prosperous commerce, be drawn into the devious and difficult paths which lead to the knowledge that is its own reward.' His heart goes out to 'the men not made to get on, the men whose heart is with their few books, or in the Lord's house, while they are behind the counter or at the clerk's desk'; to 'those who, having

the instinct for letters, yet spend their life in teaching arts not "ingenuous" to the children of commerce,' and to 'the preachers who deal with the intellect of men of business at the intervals when it is open to other interests than those of the immediate present.'[1] He laments the absence among the middle classes of any 'clearly formed public opinion on the subject of middle education,' all that exists being 'a vague, though strong, feeling that while dead languages may be fine things for a clergyman or a man who has nothing to do, they are of no use to a man of business, and that to learn them is incompatible with learning what a man of business needs to know.' He points out that if it is suggested to apply charity money to the middle or higher education, 'a cry is raised of injustice to the poor. Education is thought to be an affair of classes, and all classes above the poor, it is said, can afford to pay for the teaching suitable to them. It is not yet a recognised idea, that educational endowments can be so worked as in some degree to efface the demarcations of class, to give a freedom of self-elevation in the social scale other than that given by money, and to keep "the career open to the talents." For a single man to be found having views about better education for the middle class, a hundred may be found having views about the education of the poor.'[2]

He is constantly protesting against the false or superficial standard of social worth, which makes the discussion of educational questions upon their merits almost impossible in England. 'Such and such a

[1] Report of *Schools Inquiry Commission*, vol. viii. pp. 153 and 237.
[2] *Ib.* pp. 232, 233.

course of study is settled on logical grounds to be the best adapted for boys who are being educated for a certain kind of career in life. It gets the name of being the education of gentlemen, and immediately the schools which give it are crowded with boys not destined for such a career at all; while others, who have more real aspiration for it, are virtually excluded on social grounds. Another course is projected with a view to a career which has to be entered upon earlier than the other, and requiring different qualifications. It gets the name of being less gentlemanlike, is ticketed as "second grade," and a great part of the boys for whom it is best adapted will not use it; while of those to whom, just because they make less social pretension, it is chiefly left, a considerable number could turn the higher course of study to account.'[1] It is to 'common education' that he looks as the 'true social leveller'; the separations of classes, unavoidable in any nation, 'have been fixed and deepened in England by the fact that there has been no fusion of class with class in school or at the universities. "Middle-class education" has come to be understood as the kind of education which, being divorced from the universities, having no stimulus from government inspection, and being generally conducted merely with a view to commercial profit by the principals, is seldom either of a thorough or of an elevating kind. On the other side the term "education of a gentleman," like the term "gentleman" itself, has acquired a meaning unknown in any other countries. The term would be intelligible if it retained the meaning of a man of a certain lineage, or of a man holding a landed estate

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 403.

according to a certain tenure. It would be intelligible again if it meant a man habitually honourable in feeling, conduct, and speech. But with us nowadays it means neither of these things. It seems chiefly to indicate a kind of manner and tone of feeling acquired by those educated at the miscalled "public schools," and borrowed from them with more or less perfectness of imitation by others. I do not depreciate the value of this manner and tone of feeling, but I regret that it should be a mark of social distinction. Whatever is really of value in it should be characteristic of all men of liberal education. A properly organised system of schools would level up without levelling down. It would not make the gentleman any the less of a gentleman in the higher sense of the term, but it would cure him of his unconscious social insolence just as it would cure others of social jealousy.' To promote such a system by the establishment of a high school in his own town was his last public act, and almost his last public utterance was the expression of a hope that the time will come 'when the phrase "education of a gentleman" will have lost its meaning, because the sort of education which alone makes the gentleman in any true sense will be within the reach of all. As it was the aspiration of Moses that all the Lord's people should be prophets, so with all seriousness and reverence we may hope and pray for a condition of English society in which all honest citizens will recognise themselves and be recognised by each other as gentlemen.'[2]

The sympathy which he expresses in these passages for the middle classes, both in their starved aspira-

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 457–459. [2] *Ib.* pp. 475, 476.

tions and their plethoric contentment, was intimately bound up with a sympathy with the nonconformists, of whom those classes are so largely composed. This sympathy, which was evidently strong in him when he wrote his report on schools,[1] soon found a more favourable opportunity of expression. In the spring of 1866 he was invited to lecture before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution on Cromwell and the English commonwealth. The subject, he says, was 'an old love of mine,' and no one can read the lectures without feeling it. The whole man comes out in them. He is at home in the apparent contradiction between the philosophical mysticism and the practical statesmanship of Vane; he breathes freely on the heights of aristocratic republicanism with Milton; while his sense of the greatness of these men is merged, half gladly and half reluctantly, in his enthusiasm for the larger humanity of Cromwell. The point of view from which he looks at history is essentially that of his early essays. With all his admiration for Carlyle's treatment of the subject, he objects that it gives too little prominence to 'the strength of circumstance, the organic growth of custom and institution, which acts on the individual from without and from within, which at once informs his will and places it in limits against which it breaks itself in vain. In modern life, as Napoleon said to Goethe, political necessity represents the destiny of the ancient drama. The historic hero, strong to make the world new, and exulting in his strength, has his inspiration from a past which he knows not, and is constructing a future which is

[1] See pp. 172, 173, 236, 237 in vol. viii. of the *Schools Inquiry Commission*.

not that of his own will or imagination.' The tragedy of life lies in 'the conflict between the creative will of man and the hidden wisdom of the world, which seems to thwart it'; and it is this which gives its interest to the history of the Great Rebellion. It was the last act in an inevitable struggle, which first took this specific form in the Reformation, but which is as old as human nature itself, and is renewed on ever wider fields and with ever clearer issues whenever its self-made environment of custom and institutions ceases to satisfy its needs. 'English puritanism originated in the consciousness of a spiritual life which no outward ordinances could adequately express.' But though the ordinance must always be inadequate to the spirit, the spirit cannot be a power in the world except through the ordinance; the two are mutually complementary, not mutually exclusive. In regarding the antithesis between them as absolute, puritanism ignored a law of human life from which it could not escape; by an inherent necessity it came to set up a new authority, calling itself spiritual, but really secular, and from its very 'sincerity and logical completeness' more heavy than that which it displaced.

Thus the history of the English commonwealth is the history of the spirit of independency, 'of its inevitable conflict with presbyterianism on the one hand and the wisdom of the world on the other, of its aberrations and perplexities, of its brief triumph and final flight into the wilderness.' This was the spirit whose 'better genius' was represented in Vane, and of which the influence 'more than any other has ennobled the plebeian elements of English life.' It was the spirit which 'anticipates in moments of

ecstasy and assurance that which must be to us the ever-retreating end of God's work in the world,' and 'its danger lay in the attempt to construct a religious life, which is nothing without external realisation, on an inward and momentary intuition.' Emerging from the struggle between 'the divine right of a sacerdotal church, applied to strengthen and justify a royal interest, and the divine right of the presbyterian discipline, claiming to be equally absolute over body and soul,' it asserted 'the divine right of individual persuasion, which, while the old recognised rights were in the suspense of conflict, became a might. But this might, though in a revolutionary struggle it could conquer, was unable to govern. It was a spirit without a body, a force with no lasting means of action on the world around it.' Such organisation and stability as it did attain was due to Cromwell, the one man who 'shared its raptures, its wild energy, its scorn of prescription, and who yet had the practical wisdom, the wider comprehension, of which it was incapable.' But the only society which the pure sectarian enthusiasm could create was one founded 'not on adjustment of interests, but on unity of opinion'; a society which claimed 'not gradually to transmute, but suddenly to suppress, the feeling of the many by the reason of the few,' and which bred in its leaders the 'pride of exclusion' instead of that 'higher pride, which can possess itself in sympathy and comprehension,' and which truly represents 'the divine reason in the world.' The key to Cromwell's conduct as protector is found in his 'anxiety for a settlement which should reconcile the old interests with the new enthusiasm,' and the

hopelessness of any such settlement was 'the tragedy of his later life.' Yet the struggle did not end, as it might seem, in a 'simple catastrophe.' 'The fifteen years of vigorous growth which his sword secured for the church of the sectaries, gave it a permanent force which no reaction could suppress, and which has since been the great spring of political life in England.' The enthusiasm of Vane 'died that it might rise again. It was sown in the weakness of feeling, that it might be raised in the intellectual comprehension which is power. "The people of England," he said on the scaffold, "have been long asleep. I doubt they will be hungry when they awake." They have slept, we may say, another two hundred years. If they should yet wake and be hungry, they will find their food in the ideas which, with much blindness and weakness, he vainly offered them, cleared and ripened by a philosophy of which he did not dream.'

In these concluding words the lecturer doubtless alluded to Hegel, of whose philosophy he spoke a year later as 'having for its professed object to find formulæ adequate to the action of reason as exhibited in nature and human society, in art and religion.'[1] They lead by a natural transition to the consideration of his work as a philosophical teacher, upon which he was just entering.

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 125.

CHAPTER V

TUTORSHIP AT BALLIOL

In the spring of 1866 Green had thoughts of standing for a professorship at the Owens College, Manchester, one of the motives being that it 'might give him openings in practical life, which he would be glad of'; 'but' (he continues) 'there is so much for me to do at Oxford, if I have but health and strength to do it, that I feel it would be almost a sin to go away. I only wish it were a more healthy place.' In this year he held the office of 'senior dean' at his college, his duties being 'to set and look over the weekly essays, to manage the college examinations, and to overlook the hall and kitchen.' The death in September of James Riddell, 'one of the best men I ever knew,' made a vacancy in the teaching staff, and in the October term he was in full work, adding to his other functions lectures on the New Testament and the *Ethics* of Aristotle. In 1867 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Waynflete professorship of moral and metaphysical philosophy, and having in the same year given up his intention of standing for a vacant philosophical chair at Edinburgh, he finally settled down to the work which occupied the largest continuous portion of his life, that of a college tutor.

Circumstances combined to make his position at

first a peculiarly responsible one. The death of Riddell in 1866 has been mentioned; in 1870 Edwin Palmer resigned his tutorship, and in the same year Jowett became master. Thus in the first four years of his connexion with the college the teaching body lost three of its most eminent and devoted members. The tutorial system, indeed, which these men had done so much to create and maintain, had acquired a stability and momentum which gave their successors a comparatively easy task. Yet it is not surprising if a man of anxious temperament, peculiarly sensitive both to the claims of duty and to the annoyances of official position, felt his responsibilities keenly when (as he says in 1870) 'practically the whole subordinate management of the college devolved upon him.' He was then only thirty-four; he was probably the first layman who had held the office of tutor; and while his predecessors had added the traditional distinction and serviceable attainments of classical scholarship to their other qualifications, his chief strength lay in a comparatively new and narrow branch of study, unconnected with much of the ordinary curriculum of the university.

The following remarks from a brother-fellow who was in constant communication with him between 1866 and 1870 will confirm and develop the impressions which have been derived from the reminiscences of earlier years. 'We became companions in the common room during years of unsurpassed political interest, the years of the war between North and South America, the war between Austria and Prussia, and the movement in England for the extension of the suffrage. There were some keen politicians among those who

gathered round the common-room fire in those days, and I remember that Green's knowledge and judgment were both of them excellent. He had already written, or was then writing, articles for the North British Review, which showed the strength of his philosophical "grip" and his early maturity of view; but all this speculative profundity was compatible in him with the most patient and attentive discharge of small college duties. I remember the thoughtfulness about little things which he would throw into a college matriculation examination. Nothing was forgotten; everything went on without hurry or effort. He did not seem to be on the watch, yet nothing escaped him. I used often to note his quickness of vision; no one was more observant of what went on around him. I think this was partly due to his interest in other people and his wish to be helpful to them. I thought I sometimes noticed in those days, before 1870, a half-suppressed wish, very rarely and slightly indicated, for a position in which the many thoughts that were stirring in him would find fuller utterance; in which action would be more individual and less collective, and in which his relations to others would be of a more spiritual kind than that of a teacher to his pupils. I remember also however other remarks which seemed to show that he saw even then what a field Oxford opens to those who have a faith to communicate.

'His quiet good judgment and his perception of the right thing to be done made his assistance at college meetings and in the general work of the college most valuable. Few, I think, can have been more successful in avoiding conversational inadvertence, and the

saying of things which had better not have been said. Conversation in him was all the more instructive and satisfactory, because he had a gift for saying neither more nor less than he intended to say, and also because his fairness and candour were infectious. His sense of humour was quiet but strong. I should guess that the people who pleased him most were people who had ways of their own. His playfulness came out in his kindly recognition of individuality in his friends. Little traits would linger long in his memory, if they were traits he liked. He had some powers of mimicry, though he very rarely exercised them, and never except in the kindliest way. His habitual dress of black and grey suited him well, and was true to his character. He was drawn to plain people, to people of the middle and lower class rather than of the upper, to the puritans of the past and the nonconformists of the present, to Germans, to all that is sober-suited and steady-going. One judged from his feeling for homely, unadorned, and solid worth what he must feel for things showy, brilliant, and hollow; but he spent few words on what he disliked. His aversion to things came out not in words so much as in a tacit distaste which one was left to gather from his manner; it was indeed often rather from his silence, or the tone of what he said, than from any definite utterance that one inferred his opinion in conversation. His face expressed much; far more than he trusted his tongue to say; its rapid changes added to he interest of a talk with him; one saw in a moment whether he was with one or not. I have sometimes seen him, when something was said which called for reflection, walk to the

common-room fire from his seat in the circle, and after leaning his forehead on the mantelpiece for a moment, make some remark which went to the heart of the matter. Occasionally, though sparingly, his enthusiasm for excellence and nobleness of character would come out. No gifts or talents would make up to him for a decided deficiency in this respect. One phrase of his dwells in my memory which is significant of the respect he felt for practical ability; "yes," he would say, "but after all he is one of those men who know what is the next thing to be done."

'Of his remarkable gifts of intellect and character I need say but little. His strength lay in a rare combination of deliberative, analytic, and systematising power, and of all with force and steadfastness of character. He was not a mere discoverer of sporadic good ideas; his tendency was to form his conclusions into a whole, in which nothing was isolated or out of relation to the rest. His individuality sought and found expression in a congenial philosophy, and was intensified by so doing and strengthened for the work of life. His force of character came out in the thoroughness with which he attacked a speculative question. His was not a sanguine, it was rather perhaps a cautious and somewhat anxious temperament, but there was an element of indomitableness about it. I think I never knew anyone who had so few of the "defects of his qualities;" he was thoughtful but not dreamy, always collected and practical; his intensity was not accompanied by impetuosity; his passion for abstract thought was combined with a remarkable exactness about matters of fact, and in no way interfered with his discharge of everyday duty. On the contrary,

his hard abstract studies seemed to prepare him for dealing with practical questions; they gave him patience, perseverance, perception of the point, delicacy of touch.'

The functions of an Oxford tutor at this time, as they would appear upon paper, were to deliver a certain number of lectures and to see a certain number of pupils once or twice a week, looking over their exercises and otherwise helping them in their work for the examinations of the university. But behind these definite and narrow duties extended a general responsibility for their welfare, which would be differently interpreted according to the character of the individual and the prevailing tone of his college. So that as a matter of fact the relation of a tutor to his pupils might vary from that of a teacher of grammar and composition to that of an elder friend and general guide in the work of preparation for life. When Green entered on his tutorship at Balliol, the traditions of the office were tolerably fixed, and fixed at a comparatively high level. As a student he had worked under men of exceptional abilities and attainments, who, while holding strong and discordant theological opinions, had been united by common loyalty to the higher interests of their college; and in his own tutor in particular he had experienced what 'goodness and genius' combined can do for pupils of the most various character and social position. The qualifications which he himself brought to the work did not lie upon the surface. He lacked the easy geniality, the high spirits, the striking accomplishments, which go so far to attract the English youth. He neither dazzled nor charmed. And his want of sympathy with many

of the dominant characteristics of the great public schools tended to put a gap between him and a large proportion of the students with whom he had to do. But these drawbacks, which would have been fatal to mediocrity, disappeared before the native power and worth of his mind and character, and came in the end to give a sort of point and flavour to the very qualities which at first they had helped to disguise.

One of his first group of pupils thus describes the way in which they regarded him. 'In 1864, when I went up to Oxford, he was one of the junior fellows of Balliol. He had then no office in the college, but among the younger men there was an impression that he had unusual ability and character; and his face, as I well remember, always excited our interest. He was then very unlike anyone else in general look and appearance. He was careless about dress, so much so, that in any one else it would have seemed an affectation; but in him it was evidently part of an unstudied simplicity. On the death of Mr. Riddell he was appointed to lecture in philosophy. We were then beginning our work for the final schools. His first lecture was on the *Ethics*. Though he had great difficulty in expressing himself at that time, his lecture was from the first extremely popular, and the men all conceived a strong liking for him. The reason of this was clear. Everyone saw that there was great substantial value and originality in the work; and the very difficulty of his utterance gave one the feeling that he was working the thing out, and not repeating other people's phrases or ideas. We often had our laugh about the perplexity of these earlier lectures, but it was invariably with a feeling of affection

and trust towards the lecturer. The men in fact took a sort of pride in the difficult process which he went through before he got things clear, as if it were in some way the joint action of us all. Without any of those qualities of fluency and eloquence which attract audiences, he possessed in a singular degree the sympathy of those men whom he taught. His first group of pupils went into the schools at Christmas, 1867. We were very fortunate; there were five of us in the first class, and he was very pleased about it. I well remember our all breakfasting with him on the day after our class-list came out. We had celebrated our success with rather more than the proper amount of high spirits on the evening before, and we saw that he knew something about this, (or had guessed it), from his smile, and from one of his characteristic good-humoured remarks as he handed us our tea. Though we knew how stern he was to himself, I do not think that any of us had the feeling that he would be distant or austere to us. So far as I remember, we all felt that he was kindly and tolerant.'

The impressions here described were probably those of many undergraduates with whom he came into contact, both at this time and afterwards. But Balliol was a college composed of very mixed elements; it contained rich men and poor men, men from large schools and from small, English and Scotch, anglicans and nonconformists, pleasure-seekers and hard workers; and to such a society the new tutor offered many and various 'angles of incidence.' To a few he was an object of personal affection, to others of distant admiration, to others again of good-natured amuse-

ment; no one despised him, and though he was an uncompromising upholder of discipline, few, if any, disliked him. To many men in the college he was for a long time barely known by sight, for he lived much alone and entertained little. It was considered quite an event when in 1868 he invited two undergraduates to spend part of the Christmas vacation with him in the Isle of Wight. But from that time onwards he became more accessible and expansive, and seldom passed a year without having some companions with him in the long vacation. On these occasions his frankness and humour always made a genial atmosphere, and he enjoyed though he seldom originated the fun which such parties develop. He did not make many intimate friends, but those with whom natural affinity or special circumstances brought him into close relations never forgot what they owed to him. What he had been to his contemporaries, that he became to a few in each generation of younger men. Some perhaps wished that he had been less reserved; to some his candour might seem to border upon hardness; some felt their weaknesses unduly rebuked in his presence; but all knew that if he was severe to others he was more severe to himself, and that whatever advice he gave, it was sure to be on the side of their own better natures.

The power which his teaching exercised upon others was the reflection of the power which he himself derived from what he taught. Philosophy was to him the medium in which the theoretic impulse, the impulse to see and feel things more clearly and intensely than everyday life allows, found its most congenial satisfaction. The strength, the repose, the

mental purgation which comes to some men through artistic imagination or religious emotion, came to him through thinking. He was expressing something of his own experience when he wrote in 1866 of that 'anticipatory assimilation of the world as spiritual which is the privilege of the philosopher, and which he shares with the poet and the saint. As the poet, traversing the world of sense, which he spiritualises by the aid of forms of beauty, finds himself ever at home, yet never in the same place, so the philosopher, while he ascends the courts of the intelligible world, is conscious of a presence which is always his own, yet always fresh, always lightened with the smile of a divine and eternal youth. Everything is new to him, yet nothing strange. The results of art and science, of religion and law, are all to him "workings of one mind, features of the same face:" yet are the workings and the features infinite. No longer a servant, but a son, he rules as over his own house. In it he moves freely and with that confidence which comes of freedom.' And again, 'in those moments of our own experience, when our whole intellectual self, instead of slowly realising itself under painful conditions of sense and matter, seems to be before us at once, we have the faint image of the divine self-sufficiency.'

It was seldom indeed that his habitual self-distrust and sense of practical requirements allowed him such moments of fruition. Much more often he was vividly aware how 'such freedom and confidence, if divorced from the moral life, become a ridiculous conceit, and are justly met with the reminder that "there was never yet philosopher that could endure the toothache

patiently."'[1] So that while his own best moments were those in which the reason of the world most came home to him, he was far from wishing to drive everyone into speculation, or to disturb the satisfaction which others might attain through different modes of activity. Nor could anyone be more painfully conscious how little direct result can be expected from the study or teaching of philosophy. Starting with the accepted commonplace that this is a speculative age, he held that if there is to be theorising at all, it should be done thoroughly; but the notion that he or any thinker held in his hands a panacea for the ills of England, was of all the most abhorrent to him. Of the propagandist spirit, indeed, he had too little rather than too much. In his lectures it was conspicuously absent, and in his private work with his pupils it was hardly less so. He had neither the versatility which naturally adapts itself to various minds, nor the educational ardour which can be all things to all men in order to gain some. He often allowed those who had brought essays to him to go away with a sense that he was equally dissatisfied both with what they had written and with his own attempts to improve it. It was only men who were gifted with a certain intellectual impetuosity and aggressiveness who could draw much from him in conversation, and his very disinclination to dominate or grapple with minds which were out of harmony with his own made him ready, sometimes too ready, to acquiesce in the appearance of intellectual appreciation.

Not that he ever had, or cared to have, a chorus

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 85 and 90.

of disciples. Upon the majority of his hearers the impression which he produced was probably little more than that he was in earnest with what he said, and that it referred to matters which he considered interesting and important. With those to whom personal experience had made a reality of some religious, political, or scientific problem it was different. He might rouse them to antagonism by his criticisms of their cherished doctrines, or furnish them with what seemed a solution of their perplexities. The latter was most likely to be the case with men who, having in them some strain of idealism, had found a difficulty in adjusting their lives to it; men in whom radicalism was seeking for a meeting-point with loyalty, or whose acceptance of a moral principle or a religious idea was crossed by a half-understood scientific theory or a half-disguised selfish impulse. Such men were naturally attracted by one who saw in a law-abiding community the realisation of true freedom, and in the simplest utterances of faith the deepest truths of reason, and who believed physical law to be an expression of the same intelligence as the forms of thought and the principles of morality. To the dangers incident to any such constructive view his own analytical power and his practical hold on life supplied the antidote; but in minds where these were deficient his spirit of comprehension was liable to degenerate into a spirit of accommodation, and his fusion of false antithesis to reappear as the confusion of true.

Nor were there wanting other symptoms which usually attend the fermentation of new and potent ideas. There are a few in every generation of men at the university to whom contact with a real thinker

is like a new experience. That which for want of a better name we must call the speculative impulse, a thing in its nature as distinct, unanalysable, and incommunicable as the passion for goodness or for beauty, was in Green so fused with the rest of his personality that ordinary observers hardly felt the edge of it; but when it touched minds of the same temper, it struck fire. The enthusiasm so kindled was not for any definite project or idea, nor had the eight or ten men whom it brought together the design of propagating any particular doctrines of their master. A not unkindly wit named them 'a society for looking at things as a whole,' and perhaps the chief bond between them was a common intolerance of superficiality. If they had been asked what they believed in, they could only have answered 'in philosophy'; but the belief was not the less real because it was vague, and its gradual diffusion put a new life and seriousness into much of the teaching at Oxford. Philosophy, indeed, like other great subjects, cannot be taught without exposing itself to travesty; it becomes sentimental in the weak enthusiast, mechanical in the able philistine. And each form of the philosophical spirit has the special defects of its own qualities; one lends itself to a superior cynicism, another to complacent omniscience, a third to unctuous rhetoric. No system of teaching or examination can avoid these incidental evils; the only defence against them lies in the constant apprehension of them; but wherever the subject is taught by a person of more than ordinary force, they will inevitably appear in one form or another, exciting the ridicule of enemies and the alarm of friends.

Reference has already been made to his manner in lecturing. He was in the habit of writing full notes for his lectures, and more full as years went on, but in delivering them he seemed to be thinking his thoughts over again, and this, while it added to their impressiveness, added also to their difficulty. Nor was his method of treatment calculated to make them more easy or more attractive. There was no tendency to edification in his discourses, no personal reminiscences or applications, least of all any undertone of unction. Concrete illustrations were rare, and, when they occurred, homely to a sometimes comical degree; equally rare were speculative flights of poetry or eloquence. He moved for the most part in the middle region of analysis and criticism. Naturally far-sighted, cautious, and ready to see difficulties, he always seemed more anxious to point out the inadequacy, confusion, or possible aberrations of a theory than to elicit or emphasise its truth. This was the case even with views with which he was in substantial agreement, and as his energy was chiefly spent in confuting doctrines which he believed to be at the root of widely spread popular misconceptions, he laid himself open to the charge of being more 'critical' than 'constructive.' But the rarity of his positive professions of faith made them the more telling when they came, and their meagreness was supplemented by the conviction which they inspired that he said less than he lived. As a philosophical critic, the most distinctive feature was his impersonality, which made him seem to some people unappreciative or even unfair. He treated each philosopher as the vehicle of certain theories and nothing more. Whatever inward sym-

pathy or antipathy he might feel for a writer or a book as a whole, he seldom allowed it to appear. He seized at once upon what seemed to him the leading lines in a doctrine, and followed them out through all their windings with unsparing conscientiousness, laying more stress upon the errors to which they logically led than upon the truths of which they might be the illogical expression. And thus upon those of his hearers who were less capable of this purely speculative treatment he sometimes left the impression that the subjects of his criticism were personally little better than fools or knaves. Yet friends and foes alike have borne witness to his remarkable candour in controversy, and few men have yielded less to the temptation to take unfair advantage of an opponent or to argue for victory.

His own view of the true function and spirit of criticism is thus expressed; 'Those who understand the difference between philosophical failures, which are so because they are anachronisms, and those which in their failure have brought out a new truth and compelled a step forward in the progress of thought, will understand that a process, which looks like pulling a great philosopher to pieces, may be the true way of showing reverence for his greatness. It is a pharisaical way of building the sepulchres of philosophers to profess their doctrine or extol their genius without making their spirit our own. . . . We best do reverence to their genius, we most truly appropriate their spirit, in so exploring the difficulties to which their enquiry led, as to find in them the suggestion of a theory which may help us to walk firmly where they stumbled and

fell.'[1] Once only, in a criticism of Herbert Spencer,[2] did he allow himself to show a certain exasperation of tone, and to indulge in sarcasms which, though enlivening to his readers, caused him afterwards to say, 'while I cannot honestly retract anything in the substance of what I then wrote, there are expressions which I very much regret, as far as they might be taken to imply want of personal respect for Mr. Spencer.'[3] It was this perhaps that was in his mind in 1881 when he wrote, 'It is the inevitableness of irritation as an incident of controversial writing—an irritation not likely to render those who experience it more open to conviction—that suggests a doubt whether in any case the cause of philosophic truth is likely to be served by the method of answer and rejoinder. The independent statement of opinion, without apparent reference to other contemporary opinion from which it differs, though it may give rise to some confusion of issues, is perhaps more likely to lead to a profitable result.'[4]

The subjects on which he lectured were partly determined by the requirements of the university examinations, partly by his own choice. The teaching of philosophy in Oxford at this time centred round certain works of Aristotle, to which portions of Plato had recently been added. Modern philosophy was scarcely recognised officially as part of the course, but the writings of J. S. Mill, especially his *Logic*, were largely read, and either by direct assimilation, or through the discussion and criticism which they occasioned, were probably the most powerful element

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 5.
[2] *Ib.* vol. i. p. 373, foll.
[3] *Ib.* vol. i. p. 541.
[4] *Ib.* vol. iii. p. 148.

in the intellectual leaven of the place. The study of Plato and Aristotle had lately entered on a new phase. With an increased knowledge of German philosophy, and especially of German history of philosophy, working through men like Jowett and Pattison, it had become (to use a current antithesis) less 'literary' and more 'philosophical.' In other words, their works had begun to be treated less as instructive analyses or brilliant criticisms of the commonplaces of culture, and more as partial expressions of systematic views of human life and the world. At the same time the 'historical method' was asserting itself in every department of knowledge, and though, rightly used, such a method is only the complementary half to that of the philosopher, the two are perpetually tending in inferior hands to appear as mutually exclusive and antagonistic. 'The revived interest which is noticeable in the history of philosophy may be an indication either of philosophical vigour or of philosophical decay. In those whom intellectual indolence, or a misunderstood and disavowed metaphysic, has landed in scepticism, there often survives a curiosity about the literary history of philosophy, and the writings which this curiosity produces tend further to spread the notion that philosophy is a matter about which there has been much guessing by great intellects, but no definite truth is to be attained. It is otherwise with those who see in philosophy a progressive effort towards a fully articulated conception of the world as rational. To them its past history is of interest as representing steps in this progress which have already been taken for us, and which, if we will make them our own, carry us so far on our way towards

the freedom of perfect understanding; while to ignore them is not to return to the simplicity of a pre-philosophic age, but to condemn ourselves to grope in the maze of "cultivated opinion," itself the confused result of those past systems of thought which we will not trouble ourselves to think out.'[1] These words, written some years later, indicate the sense in which he regarded philosophy as contained in its history, and the spirit in which he thought that its history should be studied.

It is probable that, if he had been free to choose, he would not have spent upon Aristotle so much of his force as a teacher. He was not one of those to whom the products of Greek genius have a unique attraction or interest; and though for all practical purposes he was a good scholar, he did not move freely in the language, and was constantly haunted by a fear that he was not giving sufficient attention to the detailed interpretation of the text. Being however led by circumstances to make the *Ethics* one of his principal subjects, he put his strength into the lecture, and made it as instructive and effective as any other. He did not do this by using the book as a peg on which to hang disquisitions on modern questions, nor by explaining how the ideas contained in it had been historically developed, nor by illustrating them from Greek literature and history. The theory of life which found its final expression in Aristotle appealed to him on its own merits, because it was based substantially upon the same principles as his own; the principle that the higher or rational nature in man is that in which the impulse to know-

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 4.

ledge and the impulse to society have their common root; that this is what makes him most truly man and most like God; and that to promote the growth of this nature is the highest service that he can render to his fellow-men. Thus the points in the *Ethics* in which these principles are conspicuously involved were those upon which his mind naturally fastened, whether to enforce the truth of Aristotle's application of them or to point out where it was defective. And in his latest work, the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, the effect of these early studies is seen in the sympathy with which he returns to the leading conceptions of Greek moral philosophy.

'The habit of derogation from the uses of "mere philosophy,"' (he there writes), 'common alike to christian advocates and the professors of natural science, has led us too much to ignore the immense practical service which Socrates and his followers rendered to mankind. From them in effect comes the connected scheme of virtues and duties within which the educated conscience of christendom still moves, when it is impartially reflecting on what ought to be done. Religious teachers have no doubt affected the hopes and fears which actuate us in the pursuit of virtue or rouse us from its neglect. Religious societies have both strengthened men in the performance of recognised duties, and taught them to recognise relations of duty towards those whom they might otherwise have been content to treat as beyond the pale of such duties; but the articulated scheme of what the virtues and duties are, in their difference and in their unity, remains for us now in its main outlines what the Greek philosophers left it. . . . Once

for all they conceived and expressed the conception of a free or pure morality, as resting on what we may venture to call a disinterested interest in the good; of the several virtues as so many applications of that interest to the main relations of social life; of the good itself not as anything external to the capacities virtuously exercised in its pursuit, but as their full realisation. . . . When we come to ask ourselves what are the essential forms in which, however otherwise modified, the will for true good (which is the will to be good) must appear, our answer follows the outlines of the Greek classification of the virtues. It is the will to know what is true, to make what is beautiful; to endure pain and fear, to resist the allurements of pleasure (i.e. to be brave and temperate), if not, as the Greek would have said, in the service of the state, yet in the interest of some form of human society; to take for oneself, to give to others, of those things which admit of being given and taken, not what one is inclined to but what is due.' [1]

Besides the ethics, logic, and metaphysic of Aristotle, he lectured on Plato and the history of early Greek philosophy. But it was in the exposition and criticism of the English philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that he made his chief and most characteristic contribution to the cause of philosophical education, as he conceived it. Feeling in himself the fundamental unity of the human mind in its manifold activities and products, in science, art, and religion, in law and society, he could not rest in the false or shallow antitheses in which modern English culture seemed to him to be bound. This self-imposed

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, §§ 249, 253, 256.

bondage he ascribed to the want of an adequate theory of life, and this want again to the fact that speculation in England had never really advanced beyond the point at which it had been left by Hume.

In an essay published in the North British Review in 1868, under the title *Popular philosophy in its relation to life*,[1] perhaps the most pregnant and eloquent of his writings, he traces the consequences of this fact. Philosophy is represented as originating in the demand of man, a demand which he cannot help making, to understand himself and his surroundings. Beginning with the question, 'What is the world that he knows, and how does he know it?' it goes on to the question, 'What is the world that he has made, and how has he been able to make it?' The first question is never long in leading to the second, for it is prompted by the same radical impulse to self-expression and self-satisfaction. 'It is by no avoidable error, as in the effort to escape from himself he may sometimes imagine, that he has infected nature with his theology or metaphysic. Its relation to himself is the condition alike of the impulse to know it and of the possibility of its being known. . . . He is as metaphysical when he talks of body or matter as when he talks of force, of force as when he talks of mind, of mind as when he talks of God. That which he calls nature is traversed by the currents of his intellect, and where intellect has gone sentiment has followed. . . . Nature is a labyrinth in which he has wandered at will till he has lost the clue, and which at the same time is so much his own that in its perplexities he seems at war with himself.' For a time the interpre-

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 92.

tation of this seemingly external world absorbs him; his personal relations to God, his fellow-men, and his own desires 'wrap him round too closely to be contemplated'; but as his power of analysis develops, they too become objects of his curiosity, and then it is that philosophy begins to pass from the possession of a few isolated thinkers, and to become an element in general culture and a power in influencing mankind. Thus transmuted it gradually forms that pervading intellectual atmosphere which, under the name of 'enlightenment,' is what the world at large usually understands by it. Philosophy thus popularised is 'the uncritical expression of the claim to be free, to enjoy, to understand. It is the abstract or result of the various methods, poetic, religious, metaphysical, by which man has sought to account to himself for the world of his experience, as they apply directly to human life.' It naturally tends to be both sceptical and destructive; sceptical, because it brings into relief contradictions which it is too much in a hurry to think out, and destructive, because, while purporting to explain the facts, it is too superficial to do more than explain them away. The particular system of thought which still supplies English enlightenment with its formulas, is that to which Locke first gave classical expression and which Hume worked out to its logical issues. Hume showed conclusively that from the conception of the human mind with which he started none but a self-contradictory explanation could be given of what the mind does and experiences; but his successors in England, instead of being led thereby to reconsider his premisses, have gone on 'digging in the old vein which he had exhausted, and

of which his final dilemma had shown the bottom.'[1] Thus whatever 'practical reconstruction of moral ideas' there has been, 'has come not directly from a sounder philosophy, but from the deeper views of life which the contemplative poets such as Wordsworth and Shelley originated, from the revival of evangelical religion, and from the conception of freedom and right which Rousseau popularized'; and while in these directions the better mind of England has outgrown the philosophical formulas inherited from the eighteenth century, the speculative Englishman of the nineteenth, who wants a theory of life, can still only find one which ignores or falsifies his most real experiences and leaves unsatisfied his deepest needs.

If then we would not 'condemn ourselves to grope in the maze of "cultivated opinion," itself the confused result of those past systems of thought which we will not trouble ourselves to think out,' we must go back to those systems, must disengage their conclusions from the 'forms to which adaptation to the needs of plausibility has gradually reduced them,' and must 'restore to their original significance the ideas which have since become commonplaces with educated Englishmen.' If we do this, they will 'carry us by an intellectual necessity to those truer notions which, in fact, have been their sequel in the development of philosophy, but have not yet found their way into the culture of our time.'[2] These words, which describe the purpose of his *Introductions* to Hume's *Treatise of human nature*, published six years after the essay just referred to, serve equally well to

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 2. [2] *Ib.* p. 5.

describe the purpose of the lectures on English philosophy which he had been giving in the interval. The *Introductions*, which embodied the results of these lectures, were his contribution to a new edition of Hume's works, brought out by Messrs. Longman in 1874–75. From the point of view of the general reader, it is to be regretted that a work of 550 pages should be burdened with 380 pages of destructive criticism, more difficult to master than the work itself. But it will be long in England before the conditions of human experience are subjected to a treatment so patient and so penetrating; and the architectonic philosopher of the future will find in it foundations for his building where Hume had left a void.

CHAPTER VI

METAPHYSICAL PRINCIPLES

TAKEN together with the posthumous lectures on Kant's *Critique of pure reason*, and on logic,[1] the *Introductions* to Hume enable us to form a fairly complete idea of the writer's metaphysical principles, as they were in 1874, and as they substantially remained. All that can be attempted here is to disengage from the close web of criticism the positive ideas which underlie it throughout and occasionally come to the surface.

The central conception is that the universe is a single eternal activity or energy, of which it is the essence to be self-conscious, that is, to be itself and not itself in one. Of this activity, 'self-distinguishing and self-seeking,' every particular existence is a limited manifestation, and, among other such existences, those which we call 'ourselves.' In so far as there is a 'we' at all and a world which can be called 'ours,' it is because the self which is the unity of the world is 'communicated' under the particular conditions of our physical organisation. It is this fact, the fact of a self-conditioned or free energy acting under limiting conditions, which makes our experience a continual self-contradiction between what we are and what we have it in us to be. To the consciousness of this

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 1–81, and 158–306.

contradiction, that is, to our partial self-consciousness, is due the impulse both to knowledge and to goodness; and the contradiction is overcome in proportion as we think what is true and will what is unselfish.

The conception of self-consciousness as the ultimate reality is one to which we are led by reflection upon our experience, or, in other words, by asking ourselves what we mean by a fact. It makes no difference whether fact be taken in the minimum or the maximum of its meaning, whether as the simplest possible fact, expressible as merely 'something,' or as the highly complex facts covered by such words as 'science,' 'art,' 'morality,' or as the all-inclusive fact which we call 'the world.' At whatever point it is considered, it is found to consist in relationship or relationships. That which is simply itself is nothing; the reality of everything lies in its pointing beyond itself to something else; in other words, the real is always something which is itself and not itself in one, a unity in difference or differentiated unity. If for instance reality be considered where it is at its least, where it can be indicated merely as 'this,' the fact so indicated can only be fully expressed as 'this not that,' in which each constituent is nothing without the other and the two together make a unity which is both and neither of them. Take again the case of time, or reality in so far as it consists in succession, i.e. in the fact that one thing is before and after another. If the event *a* were simply over when *b* occurred, there would be no such thing as succession; if *a* is to be really before *b* and *b* really after *a*, they must coexist as well as succeed, and the full reality of time is a relationship in which something is both before and after itself. The

same is true of space, or the real so far as it consists in outsideness or in things 'here' and 'there.' Outsideness implies separateness, but one thing would not be outside another if they were merely separate; they must also make one thing, i.e. they must be something which is both here and there. If we pass from these elementary forms of reality to those which constitute the mechanical or chemical or physiological world, it is equally clear that the facts expressed by these words are relationships of increasing complexity, each analysable into a number of distinct elements and a unity in which their distinctions are neutralised and yet survive. And if, leaving the physical world, we analyse a characteristically human fact, such as a state, we arrive at the same result. 'If all interests were identical, there would be no state. On the other hand, the state tends to overcome, and, so far as it approaches perfection, actually overcomes, separation of interests. In other words, just so far as there is a state, interests no longer are really separate. In the state separation of interests may be said to exist as one factor of the reality, but as in one sense neutralised by the other factor, which is its opposite, viz. the sense of common interest. Neither would be what it is without the other, but in the state neither retains any separate reality.' Lastly, if we ask ourselves what we mean by complete reality, the world or universe, the answer must be, 'a system in which every element, being correlative to every other, at once presupposes and is presupposed by every other,' a unity which distinguishes itself from and finds itself in, not this or that thing, but everything. All fact, then, or matter of experience, consists in relation-

ship, and relationship implies self-consciousness, the only thing that we know 'in which a manifold is united without ceasing to be manifold.'[1]

The same result may be reached by another line of thought. 'The antithesis between "facts" and "things of the mind," like every form in which the impulse after true knowledge finds expression, implies a distinction between the seeming and the real, or between that which exists for the consciousness of the individual and that which really exists.' Reflection shows that such an antithesis is not really between consciousness and its unknown opposite, but between a less and more complete consciousness, and that it is only possible to a being partly self-conscious. For what do we mean by the distinction between reality and appearance? If we like to say so, every feeling is equally real, in so far as it is what it is. But it is not such reality that we have in view when we ask, Is such and such a feeling really what it seems to be? or, Do I really feel what I seem to feel? Such a question implies that the feeling asked about already goes beyond itself, that it is a feeling of something, or, in other words, a felt relationship. And accordingly the way in which we try to ascertain whether it is real or not, is not by merely feeling it over again, but by feeling it over again in a certain connexion; and we pronounce it real if we find it to be accompanied by other feelings which we expect to accompany it. The very question, then, which is the beginning of all knowledge, the question what anything is *really*, is one which can only be asked by a being whose experience is already a system in embryo and whose

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 35–36; vol. ii. pp. 15, 73; vol. i. p. 91.

consciousness is a consciousness of itself and something else in one, i.e. a self-conscious being. To a feeling which was itself and nothing more, or rather, to a feeling which in being itself was not also something more, the distinction of real and unreal would have no application, for it would be a feeling of nothing. 'In order that any definite object of experience may exist for us, our feelings must have ceased to be "separate, perishing existences," and must have become related to each other as mutually qualified members of a permanent system.'[1]

Again, science begins in the attempt to explain things, and explanation means 'the inference from a change to something which accounts for the change.' Now 'an event, interpreted as a change of something that remains constant, is no longer a mere event. It is no longer merely in time, a present which next moment becomes a past. It takes its character from relation to the thing or system of things of which it is an altered appearance, but which in itself is always the same. Only in virtue of such a relation does it require to be accounted for, to be referred to a cause.' The cause of a thing is commonly said to be 'the sum total of its conditions'; that is to say, it is 'that system of things, conceived explicitly, of which there must already have been an implicit conception in order that the event might be regarded as a change, and thus start the search for a cause.' The simplest fact, then, which can be a beginning of knowledge, is 'not a feeling, but an explanation of a feeling, which connects it by relations, that are not feelings, with an unfelt universe.' Thus 'no fact can be even

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 70, 75, 154, 266–268.

partially known without compelling an inference to the unknown,' and 'while it is true in a sense that in inference we do not go beyond experience, it is so only because in experience we already go beyond sense.'[1]

Self-consciousness, then, i.e. consciousness of system or relationship, one in many, identical in difference, is the condition of our having experience. But this consciousness only becomes ours piecemeal and by slow degrees, and it never becomes ours completely. So that while it is true that, so far as there is a world or unity of things for us at all, it is because we are potentially the consciousness which has the universe for its object, it is also true that we never get beyond the potentiality; our idea of system remains only an idea, a broken outline which gives such form as it has to all our experience, but which continually recedes as our experience fills it up. It is consciousness in this sense, partial and intermittent, that is rightly contrasted as 'merely ours' or 'subjective' with an 'objective world'; only it must be remembered that the objective world is not some unknown opposite of consciousness, but the ideal completion of that world of which we are already incompletely conscious, and that it is only the presence in us of a self not in this sense 'subjective,' that makes possible the consciousness of such a world and of our own subjectivity. What we call 'our' minds are events beginning with birth and ending with death, each again broken up into other events or mental states, into and out of which we are perpetually passing. When 'our consciousness' is spoken of, it is usually the transitions into these successive states which are thought of,

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 127–128, 281–282, 267.

while the contents or objects of the states themselves are supposed to be something outside or independent of consciousness. Whereas the truth is that a consciousness which was merely a series of transitions, of beginnings and endings, would be consciousness of nothing, and that the fact of transition itself can only be a fact to a consciousness which is not itself a transition. The parts or constituents of an object of consciousness are not before or after one another; there is an order of time in which they 'enter consciousness,' but there is no such order in them 'as in consciousness.' This is equally true whether the object be one of immediate perception, 'this table,' or one of memory, 'this is the table that I saw yesterday,' or one of reconstructive thought, such as a series of historical events or the prehistoric condition of the earth. For 'past experience is not an indefinite series of perishing impressions of separate men, but represents one world,' and 'the antecedent conditions of life and sentience, revealed by science, are conditions of what we experience, determined just as much by relation to it as it is by relation to them.' While therefore everything that happens, whether inward or outward, whether a physical phenomenon or a mental state, is as such in time, 'the presence of consciousness to itself, which as the true *punctum stans* is the condition of the observation of events in time, is not such an event itself.' So that to characterise our consciousness as a succession of states is to characterise it rather by what it is not than by what it is, for just so far as it is merely 'here' and 'there,' 'now' and 'then,' it is not truly ours at all.[1]

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 267, 271, 478; vol. ii. pp. 32, 74.

The limitations which make our consciousness subjective in the above sense arise from the fact that we are 'feeling' as well as 'thinking' beings, or (what is the same thing) that we not only have experience of a world but are ourselves parts of that world. The distinction between feeling and thought is not indeed an absolute one. Mere feeling, in the sense of that which is felt by no subject and is the feeling of no object, is not a possible element in experience; as soon as it is felt as a fact, it is already a consciousness of relation, i.e. thought. On the other hand, the first form in which we become self-conscious, the first channel through which the consciousness of a world is communicated to us, is the consciousness of some bodily change, i.e. feeling. In proportion as the communication becomes fuller, the limitations incident to its earliest forms are more and more removed, experience becomes independent of time and place, thought takes the place of feeling. But the limitations are never wholly removed. The animal organisation, in virtue of which we are parts of nature, conditions our knowledge of nature to the end. We partly understand time and space, but we partly are in them, and in so far as we are in them we do not understand them; they have us, not we them. Thus it is true in a sense to say that sensation is the test of truth in our experience of the natural world. Belief in the reality of a natural phenomenon means belief that under certain conditions a certain feeling will occur; and it is by trying whether it does so occur that we test the truth of our belief. But it is not to be supposed 'that any particular reality first comes into being on the occurrence of my feeling'; what is

'tested' by the feeling is not reality, but the adequacy of my conception of it. 'The conceived fact, the reality, that such a sensation occurs under such conditions, is unaffected by the circumstance that the sensation is not now occurring. Sensation vanishes, but not the fact that it has occurred under certain conditions, and this is its reality.' In a 'crucial experiment' a single experience is enough to communicate the fact, and the fact once is always a fact to the experimenter. To a being whose experience was wholly of this crucial character, i.e. to a perfectly intelligent being, 'the difference between an actual event in the way of sensation and the possibility of such an event, i.e. a true and adequate conception, would not exist.' But in most cases repeated sensations are needed to enable us to be sure under what conditions the sensation occurs, as well as to enable us to recover those conditions when the sensation is over. Thinking is the activity by which we free ourselves from these limitations, and realise facts independently of the circumstances under which they come into consciousness. To imagine, indeed, that we can ever be wholly free is 'the frenzy of philosophy'; it must remain true that to every man all nature but a little is 'expunged and void,' and that the little that remains to him is different from what it is to everyone else. But each fresh step in understanding the world is a step in the liberation of the self. In proportion as the supposed isolation and mutual exclusiveness of objects and events gives way before the growing discovery of the uniformity of nature, the false individuality of the self is fused in a common intelligence, and mind meets mind in a

medium of truth which is the essence of all but the property of none. The true objectivity of things is seen to lie, not in being outside the mind, which could only mean that they were no objects at all, nor in their materiality or existence in space and time, which is only one and the most elementary of the differences of which self is the identity, but in the indissoluble unity of system which makes every thing a 'retainer to' something else and ultimately to the whole. On the other hand, the true individuality of the self comes to be understood, not as the imperviousness and incommunicableness of momentary feeling, but as the energy, at once self-contained and self-communicating, which 'spreads undivided' in knowledge and 'operates unspent' in love.[1]

These ideas are not new. In one form or another they are the common heritage of all true idealism, of all idealism which is, in Green's own words, 'not the admission of an ideal world of guess and aspiration alongside of the empirical, but the recognition of the empirical itself as ideal,' and which 'trusts, not to a guess about what is beyond experience, but to analysis of what is within it.'[2] The particular manner in which he expressed them was partly natural to him, as appears from his earliest writings, partly it was the result of a sympathetic study of Kant and Hegel. It must always be a stumbling-block to the appreciation of his or any similarly formulated theory, that some of its leading terms are embedded in associations the reverse of those which the theory is intended to convey. This is conspicuously the case with 'feeling'

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 33, 74–75, 185–186.
[2] *Ib.* pp. 179 and 449.

and 'thought.' The former is constantly used by English people to express the complete or vivid realisation of a truth, while the latter is used with equal frequency to describe any mental reproduction, however partial or faded, of a past experience. Philosophy, like other human utterances, must talk in metaphors, and one metaphor is as good as another if it be not misunderstood. The persons 'obscurely called transcendental' are not, as is often supposed, persons who have quarrelled with their eyes and ears, nor do they wish to discourage other people from the use of those organs. Rather they would draw their attention to the fact that much more than mere seeing and hearing is involved in the experiences generally so called, and that to hold feeling to be the test of reality is like holding the truth of a physical law or a moral principle to depend on their being understood in a particular room or in the words of a particular person. But if anyone likes to say that a thing must be 'felt' if it is to be real, whether in the strict sense that the reality of the physical world implies the actual or possible affection of the human organism, or in the general sense that if truth is to be operative it must come home to the individual, by all means let him continue to do so. Only do not let him first use the word to express the highest and deepest modes of consciousness, and then proceed to argue that, as all feeling is a physical process, truth and duty are after all nothing but neural tremors.

True idealism and true materialism have their common root in the same ultimate fact, the fact that any piece of human experience is on the one side a

certain combination of simpler elements or resultant of simpler forces, while on the other it is itself an element in a larger combination, a factor in a fuller result. Two lines of interpretation are thus open; it may be read backwards into what it implies, or forwards into what it suggests. Both are equally legitimate and equally necessary, and the interpreters, if they understand their business, are aware that, though they apparently diverge more widely at every step, they are really moving in the same circle and will find that they have met when they reach the end. But it is seldom that the work of explanation is carried on with this mutual intelligence. More often the man who sets about to explain human experience by analysing it into its simplest elements gradually forgets or ignores the experience of which they are the elements, and while he continues to call them constituents, eventually leaves nothing for them to constitute. The thing to be explained is thus explained away, and is only reinstated by a side-wind of logical inconsistency or as a concession to vulgar prejudice. Meantime the speculative results get popularised, and minds which are attracted by their simplicity frame out of them a philosophy of life. But the logic of facts is stronger than that of theory, and the half-true abstractions of popularised materialism have to be accommodated to the concrete experience of its believers. The accommodation is effected in different ways. By some the elements of experience for which the theory has no room are disposed of as 'fictions,' 'conventions,' or 'mere ideas.' By others room is made for them by force, with various degrees of resulting dislocation and embarrassment. The facts into which

the banished ideal element has been restored become 'mysteries' or 'miracles,' and the confusion reaches its climax in some form of disguised idolatry, which invests a material object or event with the spiritual attributes which materialism had eliminated.

It was the pressing consciousness of these and similar features in the intellectual life of England that led Green to study with special interest the philosophical theories of which they seemed to him to be symptoms. Philosophy has its source in current opinion, and into current opinion it eventually returns. It begins by condensing and clarifying the sporadic and confused ideas of educated but unreflective people, and it ends by discharging them again, pregnant with new force, into the mental atmosphere from which they were drawn. It is the strength and the weakness of the most characteristically English metaphysic that it has been, or has been supposed to be, a metaphysic of 'common sense.' The language of Locke and Hume 'had none of that academic or *ex cathedra* character, which has made German philosophy almost a foreign literature in the country of its birth. They wrote as citizens and men of the world, anxious (in no bad sense) for effect; and even when their conclusions were remote from popular belief, still presented them in the flesh and blood of current terms used in the current sense.'[1] But while it was their boast to base themselves on the experience of plain men, and to reject everything that would not stand its test, they only half realised what they were professing. Starting from the position that all matter of experience is consciousness, and that all

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 4.

consciousness is ultimately feeling in various combinations, they attempted to deduce the combinations from that which was combined in them, not seeing that the 'reflection,' which they contrasted as secondary and derivative with 'sensation' as primary and original, was the very activity which made sensation into fact and lay behind the reality which they announced as ultimate. Locke's special contribution to the work was to 'formulate what everyone thinks,' and 'his essential merit was that, at whatever cost of confusion or contradiction, he at least formulated it fully.' Thus in him 'the dialectic, which popular belief implicitly involves, goes on under our eyes,' and in following his tortuous endeavours to derive mind from 'its own misunderstood creations,' we share the inevitable 'unrest which attaches to it in this self-imposed subjection.' From the 'chaos of antinomies' which he left Hume elicited order and consistency by a method which 'disposed of both the outward and the inward synthesis, both of the unity of feelings in a subject matter and of their unity in a subject mind, as "fictions of thought,"' and thus forced on philosophers 'the vital question whether a mind which thus invents has been effectively suppressed,—whether, indeed, the theory can be so much as stated without a covert assumption of that which it claims to have destroyed.' [1]

But just because the full import of his method has not been understood, 'the failure to which it was foredoomed has not been generally recognised.' He is commonly supposed to have done nothing more than describe the historical process 'by which, given

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 111, 112.

certain relations objectively existing, a knowledge of them on the part of the individual has been gradually formed'; whereas what he really tried to do was to explain how, 'in the absence of all such relations as objectively real, the "fiction" of their existence has come to be formed.' To this want of understanding is due the modern idea that his doctrine 'only required reinforcement from the discovery of the law of hereditary transmission to become proof against all attack.' It is supposed that 'by showing that constant experiences of the race become organised tendencies which are transmitted as a heritage,' the nature of space, time, causality, and other elementary constituents of those experiences is explained; and the supposition culminates in the attempt 'to imagine an evolution of the self-conscious subject from the gathered experience of the sentient organism, an evolution of the unifying agent from that which it renders one.' Such an attempt is in the strict sense 'preposterous,' because 'evolution implies some identity as well as differentiation, some continuance of the material of evolution into the evolved product; but there is no common element between the development through repeated sensation of the structure organic to sense and the development of consciousness in experience of facts,' nor can a sequence of feelings be made by any device to 'yield anything so antithetic to itself as a consciousness of a cosmos in which sequent feelings have become objectively localised facts.' It is not by investigation of the structure and processes of the sentient organism that the ultimate nature of human experience can be arrived at, for the very conception of the organism

is itself an element in the experience and presupposes the explanation of it. 'For the ascertainment of what human thought and feeling are we have nothing to resort to but the analysis of what we ourselves are doing and have done. There are such things as knowledge, art, morality, which somehow are our work. By considering what we must have done in order to their existence, and in no other way, can we learn the ultimate nature of the thought and feeling realised in them. We have to ask, for instance, what our consciousness must have done, and been in order to do, that there should be for it what we call facts, and these connected in a single world. Till we have learnt something of what our consciousness is by such a method as this, however imperfectly carried out, the physiologist can tell us nothing about it, for there is no question in regard to it for him to answer. It is just in so far as some mental analysis, however crude, has disentangled some thread from the web we are ever weaving in knowledge and action, that there is something to suggest an enquiry into the particular neural processes that accompany particular mental ones. The enquiry may no doubt result in discoveries of the greatest importance for the benefit of man's estate. It is not, however, our conception of what our consciousness is, not our knowledge of knowledge, that will gain in clearness or fulness thereby, but our knowledge of the nervous organism that will be enlarged by the discovery of functions which it exercises in relation to consciousness. When we analyse any mode of consciousness, we do not come upon neural tremors. Nothing that the physiologist can detect, no irritation, or irradiation, or affection

of a sensitive organ, enters into it at all. The relations which these terms represent are all of a kind absolutely heterogeneous to and incompatible with the mutual determination of ideas in the unity of consciousness. They all imply distinctions of space and time which that unity perhaps renders possible, but which it excludes from itself.' [1]

These latter passages are from essays published four years later than the *Introductions* to Hume, in which, feeling that 'each generation requires the questions of philosophy to be put to it in its own language, and, unless they are so put, will not be at the pains to understand them,' he applied the same principles of criticism to contemporary English psychology as represented by Herbert Spencer and G. H. Lewes.[2] It is noticeable that the analysis of the actual achievements of man, which he here opposes as the true metaphysical method to that of a misunderstood materialism, is the same as that which he elsewhere opposes to an equally misunderstood idealism. If the facts of experience cannot be resolved into 'feeling,' in the sense of neural processes, he was equally clear that they cannot be resolved into 'thought,' in the sense of the particular processes of reasoning by which each individual arrives at his knowledge. If (he insisted) the statement that thought is the reality of things is to approve itself as more than 'a presumptuous paradox,' it must be made clear that it is based upon 'an analysis of the objective world, not upon reflection on those processes of our intelligence which really presuppose that world.'

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 382, 467, 474, 475, 476.
[2] *Ib.* pp. 373–520.

It must appeal for support, not to 'the discursive activity exhibited in our inferences and analyses,' but to 'things.' Such discursive activity varies with every individual mind; its whole meaning and value is relative to results which, as results, are not affected by it, and in the results, in the actual consciousness which is knowledge, the idiosyncrasies of method disappear. Thus what seemed to him the 'one essential aberration' in Hegel was that he had treated, or appeared to treat, the 'process of philosophising' as 'a sort of movement of the absolute thought.' The 'vital truth which Hegel had to teach' he took to be, 'that there is one spiritual self-conscious being, of which all that is real is the activity or expression; that we are related to this being, not merely as parts of the world which is its expression, but as partakers in some inchoate measure of the self-consciousness through which it at once constitutes and distinguishes itself from the world; and that this participation is the source of morality and religion.' But the belief that 'the objective world, in its actual totality, is thought,' requires the constant reminder that 'the processes of our intelligence are but reflections of that real thought under the conditions of a limited nature.' Only if we can sustain ourselves at this double point of view do we appropriate the true spirit of Hegelianism, and unless we so sustain ourselves, our idealism, however much we may protest that it is 'absolute,' remains merely 'subjective.' [1]

These remarks explain the noticeable fact that, while he regarded Hegel's system as 'the last word of philosophy,' he did not occupy himself with the exposi-

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 143.

tion of it, but with the reconsideration of the elements in Kant of which it was the development. In wrestling with the obscurity, awkwardness, and verbal inconsistency of the earlier philosopher, in tracking him through 'the vital play of opposing tendencies, constantly shifting their relations, but unable to arrive at a complete adjustment,' he seemed to feel his hold upon truth grow firmer, his confidence in reason more secure; while to the victorious flight of his successor, which seems to break through all dilemmas and absorb all antitheses, he could not abandon himself without a touch of misgiving. He had no liking for philosophical 'leaps in the dark,' and any necessity for distinguishing between an 'esoteric' and an 'exoteric' element in intellectual life excited his suspicion; if he was to be an Hegelian, it must not be with only 'a fraction' of himself, it must be on 'the weekdays of ordinary thought' as well as on 'the Sundays of speculation.'[1] The quality of mind which distinguished him in practical life followed him into philosophy. In both he showed the same combination of simplicity and depth, of homeliness and elevation, of limitation and comprehension. While the whole of his metaphysic might be said to be little more than a prolonged attempt to get to the bottom of the question, What is a fact of experience? an occasional remark shows that in his mind this apparently simple question involved that of the nature of the world and of God. And though he had neither the varied information which can illustrate and enforce the bare results of thought, nor the plastic impulse which divines the whole before it knows the details,

[1] *Works* vol. 141, 142.

yet even when he was most abstract and difficult he always gave the impression of having his feet upon the ground, and if there is little external system in his writings, there is hardly a page upon which the unity of his mind has not left its mark. As has been well said, he was a man 'who scarcely felt that he had a scientific right to any principle which he had not submitted to a testing process of years, and who never satisfied himself—as men of idealistic tendencies are too apt to satisfy themselves—with an intuitive grasp of any comprehensive idea, until he had vindicated every element of it by the hard toil of an exhaustive reflexion. Hence he was almost painful in the constancy of his recurrence to certain fundamental thoughts, which he never seemed to have sufficiently verified and explained, and which he was ever ready to reconsider in the light of new objections, even those that might seem to be comparatively unimportant to others. In this he showed how a deep faith in certain principles may be united with the questioning temper of science, and even with a scrupulous scepticism which is ever ready to go back to the beginning, that it may exhaust everything that can be said against them. For such a mind there must always be a wide division between faith and reason, or (what in philosophy comes to the same thing) between a principle and its development into a system. Its appropriate activity must be rather to lay and to try the foundations than to build the superstructure. But it is the result of such work, and of such work alone, to secure that the foundations are immovably fixed upon the rock.[1]

[1] Professor E. Caird, in the preface to *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, edited by Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane; London, 1883.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES

'FOR such a mind there must always be a wide division between faith and reason'; these words, eminently true in the context in which they are used, would be misleading if the terms 'faith' and 'reason' were understood in the sense which theological controversy has given to them, a sense which would imply that to Green the truth of philosophy was different from or even incompatible with the truth of religion. That the reverse of this was the fact we have already indicated, and may now proceed to show more in detail. All who read his earliest writings must be struck with their religious tone, and will feel that this tone is no mere relic of early education or echo of a traditional phraseology, but is the natural reflex of the writer's inmost experience and convictions. They will also recognise the constant recurrence under different expressions of a single central idea, the idea that the whole world of human experience is the self-communication or revelation of an eternal and absolute being, and that dependence upon and identity with such a being is the source at once of the infinite littleness and the infinite greatness of man. 'The outer world,' we read in his first printed essay, 'is no independent existence, but a means through which man's own

mind is ever more communicated to him, through which the deity, who works unseen behind it, pours the truth and love which transform his capabilities into realities.' This is the lesson which the observation both of man and nature has to teach; 'each, we may truly say, is a reasonable soul, one as being the living receptacle, the other the apt channel, of the influx of divinity.' When the good man studies the laws of the physical world, 'he finds that it is only what he gives to it that he receives from it, but yet by some mysterious affinity it evokes what he has to give, and then it bears witness with his own spirit that what he gives is not his own, but inspired from above'; and similarly when he reflects on the force of circumstances in his own life, he comes to recognise that while 'it cannot be evaded, it may become a power of good instead of evil,' and is conscious of being 'no longer the slave of the world, but of him whose service is perfect freedom.'[1]

It is the failure to learn this lesson that causes many of the disappointments of modern men of genius; 'they forget that all truth partakes of the nature of revelation, and that, though they are bound to work actively on their own part, yet it is only by humbly resigning themselves "in a wise passiveness" to the heavenly influences which are ever about them, that their minds can attain to that harmony with themselves and the divine idea which is the key of all knowledge. To purge the soul of this false conceit is part of the function of great works of imagination. 'It is the littleness, not the greatness of man, which separates him from the divine; not intellectual pride,

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 4, 5, 6.

not spiritual self-assertion, but the meanness of his ordinary desires, the degradation of his higher nature to the pursuit of animal ends, keep him under the curse. From this curse tragedy, in its measure, helps to relieve him. For an hour, it may be, or a day, it raises him into a world of absolute ideality, where he may forget his wants and his vanity, and lose himself in a struggle in which the combatants are the forces of the spirit, and of which the end is that annihilation in collision with destiny which is but the blank side of reconciliation with it.' Such reconciliation, partly attained by self-surrender to the truth of science or art, is attained more fully in religion. 'The common doctrine, which connects the sense of sin with the confidence of salvation, has often been denounced by theologians; but it seems to have its root in the truest feelings which bind earth to heaven. When the force of circumstances has lost that hold on the spirit which cuts it off from communion with God, it will still limit our power in action, and prevent our outward walk and conduct from answering exactly to the motions of our purified will, and thus our very imperfections may win us to that childlike dependence on God which is only another aspect of the assurance of salvation.'[1]

The ideas thus expressed in youth recur, in less distinctively theological language, in his later writings. 'The common characteristic of all such modern philosophy as is not either sceptical or materialistic is, that it makes human thought potentially divine,'[2] and his own was no exception. In the essay on Aristotle, referring to the supposed unknowableness

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 15, 25. [2] *Ib.* p. 172.

of God, he says, 'If in any true sense man can commune with the spirit within him, in the same he may approach God as one who, according to the highest christian idea, "liveth in him." Man, however, is slow to recognise the divinity that is within himself, in his relation to the world. He will find the spiritual somewhere, but cannot believe that it is the natural rightly understood. What is under his feet and between his hands is too cheap and trivial to be the mask of eternal beauty. But half aware of the blindness of sense which he confesses, he fancies that it shows him the everyday world, from which he must turn away if he would attain true vision. If a prophet tell him to do some great thing, he will obey. He will draw up ideal truth from the deep, or bring it down from heaven, but cannot believe that it is within and around him. Stretching out his hands to an unknown God, he heeds not the God in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being. He cries for a revelation of him, yet will not be persuaded that his hiding-place is the intelligible world, and that he is incarnate in the son of man, who through the communicated strength of thought is lord also of that world.'[1] In the essay on popular philosophy, again, he speaks of the consciousness of sin as 'the consciousness of an infinite vacancy only possible to a being capable of an infinite fulness,' and declares that, 'only if we recognise in man a spirit properly infinite, because an object to itself, but which has gradually and with perpetual incompleteness to realise its infinite capacity, does this form of religious experience, of which all other forms are modifications, become explicable.'[2]

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 87. [2] *Ib.* p. 121.

In the first *Introduction* to Hume the consideration of the metaphysical proof of the existence of God gives him occasion to develop these ideas further. Locke had argued that if anything really now exists, something must have existed from eternity, and that thus the real existence of ourselves, of which we have immediate knowledge, is evidence of the real existence of God. The validity of such an argument is shown to depend on what we understand by the real existence of anything. If it means the occurrence of an event, the presentation of something here and now, then, as an event is something which happens after something else, we can doubtless argue from any given occurrence to a series of preceding occurrences, and to such a series no limit can be set, because a first event would be no event at all; it would be 'a contingency contingent upon nothing.' But such an 'unlimited addibility' of events clearly cannot be that which constitutes the 'infinity' of God, any more than an unlimited addibility of spaces can be that which constitutes his 'immensity.' Whatever else these words mean they imply totality, but a totality of times and spaces is from the nature of the case impossible; a number of things of which the sum can always be increased obviously cannot represent a perfect being, nor is a thing repeated an indefinite number of times in any way different from the same thing not repeated at all. Indeed the power which we have, or rather the necessity which we are under, of thinking of nature as infinitely divisible or infinitely addible, so far from implying an infinite capacity in us, 'arises from the presentation of objects under that very condition of endless, unremoved, distinction, which

constitutes the true limitation of our thought'; it is because we only know nature under the conditions imposed by our sensitive organisation that it is an illimitable process, and, in this sense, the infinity of our experience simply means its perpetual incompleteness. But the truth is that when we argue from an event to something which accounts for it, we are no longer treating it as merely an event, as 'a present which next moment becomes a past'; we are treating it as something which 'takes its character from the relation to the thing or system of things of which it is an altered appearance, but which in itself is always the same,' and the complete 'account' of it would be nothing less than the fully realised conception of that system. 'In short, if events were merely events, no law of causation and therefore no knowledge would be possible. If the knowledge founded on this law actually exists, then the "argumentum a contingentia mundi" rightly understood—the inference from nature to a being neither in time nor contingent but self-dependent and eternal, that constant reality of which events are the changing appearance—is valid, because the conception of nature, of a world to be known, already implies such a being.'

Applying these considerations to the particular thing called the self, we must say that, if the reality of the self is taken to consist in 'single feelings in the moments of their occurrence,' to prove a real existence of God from it is simply 'to prove one impossibility from another.' For just as each outer thing turns out to be (in Locke's language) a 'retainer to something else,' so is it with the mind, as long as by the mind is

understood 'a thinking thing, different in each man, to which his inner experience is referred as accidents to a substance. The same law of thought which compels such reference requires that the thinking thing in its turn, as that which is born grows and dies, be referred as an accident to some ulterior substance. Such a dependent being cannot be an ultimate substance; nor can any natural agents to which we may trace its dependence really be so either.' 'The first result of such a consideration will naturally be an attempt to treat the inner synthesis as a fiction of thought or figure of speech'; but 'the final result will rather be the discovery that the single feeling is nothing real, but that the synthesis of appearances, which alone for us constitutes reality, is never final or complete; that thus absolute reality, like ultimate substance, is never to be found by us—in a thinking as little as in a material thing—belonging as it does only to that divine self-consciousness, of which the presence in us is the source and bond of the ever-growing synthesis called knowledge, but which, because it is the source of that synthesis and not one of its partial results, is neither real nor knowable in the same sense as is any other object. It is this presence which alone gives meaning to "proofs of the being of God," to Locke's among the rest. For it is in a sense true, as he held, that my own real existence is evidence of the existence of God, since the self, in the only sense in which it is absolutely real or an ultimate subject, is already God.' The true infinity of God, then, so far from being infinity of duration, is inconsistent with the very notion of duration; 'it is not "the idea we have of perishing distance," derived from our

fleeting consciousness in which what is once past can never be recalled, but the attribute of a consciousness of which, if it is to be described in terms of time at all, it can only be said that "it does now exist to-morrow."' And 'if it be asked, What meaning can we have in speaking of such a consciousness? the answer must be, Just as much or as little meaning as we have when, in like contradiction to the successive presentation of ideas, we speak of a self, constituted by consciousness, as identical with itself throughout the years of our life.'[1]

The result of these and similar passages is that God is the ultimate being or reality, that to which we come when we think out what is implied in the existence of a world to be known and a mind to know it, that of which there is already a forecast in the most elementary facts of human experience, and of which the fullest human experience is still only a forecast. We have now to see how this conception was connected in his mind with the christian conception of God. His view of christianity is to be gathered partly from courses of lectures on parts of the New Testament, delivered at frequent intervals during his tutorship, partly from occasional addresses of a distinctly religious character. The former, of which some extracts are printed in the *Works*,[2] were not intended to be original contributions to biblical criticism. He took the material for them chiefly from German works, especially those of F. C. Baur, and his main purpose was to enforce certain truths

[1] For the last three paragraphs see *Works*, vol. i. pp. 120–121, 124–125, 128–129, 227.

[2] Vol. iii. pp. 186–220.

contained in the books of the New Testament, and at the same time to point out where they seemed to him to have been misunderstood or perverted by the writers themselves or by subsequent interpreters. Probably many of his hearers were incapable of appreciating at the time the deeper ideas which he endeavoured to elicit from the epistles of Paul and the fourth gospel, and for that very reason they were likely to be disproportionately impressed by the unfavourable light which he sometimes threw upon the controversies of the early church. But if in these critical and expository lectures his intense sympathy with the spirit of Jesus and Paul was less obvious than his impatience of the mystifications with which party prejudice or ecclesiasticism had overlaid it, in the addresses on *The witness of God* and *Faith*[1] his positive convictions found unabated expression. It had been a custom with the tutors at Balliol to speak to their pupils on the evening before the Sundays on which the communion was to be administered, and when he became a tutor he had, as a layman, to consider whether he should continue the practice. The long-cherished desire to utter himself on religion, checked by the consciousness 'with how little of personal example he could enforce his words,' resulted in his speaking 'seldom and below his conviction'[2] on the subjects which of all others lay nearest to his heart. The first address was given in 1870, the second not until 1877, and he never gave another. But in these two is concentrated the essence of his religious experience, expressed with all his accustomed weightiness

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 230–276. [2] *Ib.* p. 246.

and with a simplicity and finish to which he seldom attained.

The study of them shows that the bond of connexion between his metaphysic and his religion lay in the conception of self-consciousness. By this, as we have seen, he understood a consciousness which is itself and not itself in one. Such a consciousness, operative in the simplest human perceptions and desires, reaches its highest forms in intelligence and love. The impulse to understand the world may be described with equal truth either as the impulse to make it our own or as the impulse to put ourselves into it. It is an impulse only possible to a being conscious of something which it is not, but in which for that very reason it feels an interest. Of this interest the emotions associated with understanding are various forms; the fear of the unknown, the distress of doubt, the pricking of curiosity, the ardour of discovery, the joy of vision, these can only be felt by a power which in missing, seeking, and finding truth misses, seeks, and finds itself. To this self-conscious power is due the fact that each fresh act of understanding, while it brings a keener sense of satisfaction, brings also a keener sense of more to be understood. For the growth of the subject in knowledge is also the growth of its object; the beyond which the self divines everywhere is no mirage, but the projection of its own infinity; and in this sense it is true to say that man is what he understands, and that in coming to know the world he comes to be himself. In love the same activity is carried to a higher stage; here the self is conscious not only of a unity of being but of a unity of will with that which it loves; it

finds its own good in that of its object, and in living for it lives for itself. Love is thus the consummation of self-consciousness; in it the activity which begins in the mere sense of self and something else, reaches the point at which absolute self-satisfaction and absolute self-surrender are one and the same thing. We may best conceive of God as such a completed self-consciousness, a being of perfect understanding and perfect love, whose life is an eternal act of self-realisation through self-sacrifice. The essence of christianity lies in the fact that it has expressed more articulately and enforced more practically than any other religion this conception of the divine nature. In the New Testament God is described as loving the world, as dying for it, and as living again in it, and these acts are represented not merely as events which took place once and were over, but also as an eternal life in which every man may partake if he will, and apart from which he is spiritually dead. In the latter mode of representation, as Green conceived, lies the permanent truth of christianity, and to realise this truth for himself and others was the object of all his thinking about religion.

'It has been sometimes remarked that if all the New Testament had been lost to us except some half-dozen texts, the essence of christianity would have been preserved in these, so that out of them everything in it that is of permanent moral value might have been developed; and if there can be an essence within the essence of christianity, it is the thought embodied in the text, "The word is nigh thee;" the thought of God not as "far off" but "nigh," not as a master but as a father, not as a terrible outward power,

forcing us we know not whither, but as one of whom we may say that we are reason of his reason and spirit of his spirit; who lives in our moral life, and for whom we live in living for the brethren, even as in so living we live freely, because in obedience to a spirit which is our self; in communion with whom we triumph over death, and have assurance of eternal life.' These words give the keynote of his religious belief. In the unfinished address [1] from which they are taken he had intended to consider in what sense we are 'rationally entitled' to this conception, 'which was the kernel of St. Paul's christianity, and which still seems the only foundation for a religious morality.' The ultimate justification of it, the evidence, in other words, for the belief in God, in the only sense in which it admits of evidence, he finds in the moral nature of man, as in the *Introduction* to Hume he found it in his intellectual nature. As knowledge, with its implied distinction of degrees of truth, is only possible to a self to which every perception suggests a further unknown but knowable world, so moral action, i.e. action expressing desire to become better than we are, implies 'the conscious contrast between an actual and possible self, and the impulse to make that possible self real.' And as the desire to understand, i.e. to be more at one with reality, is its own evidence of an absolutely real in which through knowledge we increasingly participate, so the desire to be better, the desire for a more satisfying state of ourselves, is its own evidence of an absolute best, with which through unselfish life we more and more identify ourselves; and this best or 'possible' self is God. If such an

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 220–229.

account of him seem to imply that 'he does not actually exist at all, but is a mere name for an empty ideal of what each of us would like to become,' it must be remembered that in the moral development of the self, as in any other development, the result which is being developed is the true reality, while what we are accustomed to call our 'real' self, the self as it happens to be at any given point in its development, is only a stage on the way to a completer self, relatively to which it is unreal. Nor need we be alarmed by the thought that so to conceive of God is in a sense to identify him with man. The identity of two things not only admits but implies difference. The identity of the human with the divine consists in the consciousness which man has of a perfect being which is his own self and which yet he is not; the consciousness, if the paradox may be allowed, of being better than he is. Selfishness or sin is the attempt to find satisfaction in what cannot satisfy him, or, in other words, the attempt to live as if the limited self which he is at any moment were final or absolute. He escapes from sin in becoming conscious of it, i.e. in becoming conscious of his actual limitations and his infinite possibilities, of his difference from and his identity with a perfect being. While therefore it is true that but for his consciousness of God he would not be conscious of sin, it is also true that sin is not in God; the imperfection which in man is never wholly overcome, but remains a positive and final fact separating him from God, exists in God not as sin but as an element in the divine perfection, in which its finality, and therefore its sinfulness, is done away.

This conception of God as the ideal human self

is worked out, on somewhat different lines, in the address on *The witness of God*.[1] Starting again with Paul's conception of Christ as God present and operative in man, he asks, 'Can we penetrate behind the cloak of theological artifice with which his language has been overlaid, to a meaning, true, permanently, and for us?' In declaring Christ to be one with God, 'so that what he did God did,' Paul implied that 'a death unto life, a life out of death, must be in some way the essence of the divine nature; must be an act, which, though exhibited once for all in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, is yet eternal, the act of God himself'; and in declaring further that man has to die and live again with Christ, he implied that man has continually to 're-enact' in his life this eternal act of God. This means that in order to get to God man must begin by surrendering all 'personal pretension'; he must recognise the fact that all that he truly is and does is derived, communicated, revealed; that what he calls his self, that which he hugs, that of which he is proud, that in which he shuts himself up against other men, is really dependent on a being which is not here or there, not of this time or that, not mine or yours. To recognise this is to die in order to live, to empty oneself in order to be filled; it is the putting on of a 'new man,' showing itself in a changed attitude of mind and character. A man so transformed 'looks even upon the natural world with altered eyes; it is no longer a field for complacent curiosity to roam in, but the first stage of God's revelation of himself.'

For there is an intellectual as well as a moral

[1] *Works*, vol. iii.

selfishness. The indolence which makes us acquiesce in a superficial view of things, the conceit of knowledge which makes us 'pore upon ourselves and look askance at our fellows,' separate us from God no less than sensuality and self-indulgence; just as on the other hand the 'fabric of true knowledge is without figure of speech the work of the same spiritual yearning' as 'the temple of christian fellowship, where no man seeks his own, but everyone another's good.' God is perfect intelligence and love, and the only way to know him and prove him to ourselves is to become like him. 'We talk, half sorrowfully, half complacently, of the demoralising or unchristianising tendencies of modern life. Opinion, it is said, is fundamentally unsettled; science keeps encroaching on the old faith; the lineaments of the God whom our fathers worshipped are blurred by philosophy; and meanwhile an enlightened hedonism seems competent to answer all practical questions. It is no fault of the individual if, amid such influences, he loses the thought of God's presence and the consciousness of his love, which indeed can only be retained by taking refuge in mysteries or going out of the world.' But language like this is only 'the foppery of men who want new excuses for old sins. It is still our sins and nothing else that separate us from God. Philosophy and science, to those who seek not to talk of them but to know their power, do but render his clearness more clear, and the freedom of his service a more perfect freedom. His witness grows with time. In great books and great examples, in the gathering fulness of spiritual utterance which we trace through the history of literature, in the self-

denying love which we have known from the cradle, in the moralising influences of civil life, in the closer fellowship of the christian society, in the sacramental ordinances which represent that fellowship, in common worship, in the message of the preachers through which, amid diversity of stammering tongues, one spirit still speaks,—here God's sunshine is shed abroad without us. If it does not reach within the heart, it is because the heart has a darkness of its own, some unconquered selfishness which prevents its relation to him being one of "sincerity and truth."'

The Pauline conception, then, of true religion, as the participation by us in 'an eternal act of death into life, manifested in Christ,' is not 'a mere piece of doubtful metaphysics'; rather it expresses the fundamental principle of human nature and experience, the principle that man, being self-conscious, can only realise himself by going out of himself, by assimilating and being assimilated to the being to whom at every point in his experience he finds himself related. It is a principle to which all that is best in human life testifies, and the only and sufficient way to prove it to ourselves is 'to share in the higher spirit' of the men about us. 'We need not make a rush after the heroic, or seek to jump out of our circumstances. The end to be attained is indeed infinite; but we need not therefore vainly try to swell our own effort to a like infinity, for it is already attained for us. The sacrifice has been offered, the goal has been won. God is for ever perfect light and love.' All that man has to do is to surrender himself to the eternal fact, to live in order to understand and to love what he understands. 'Such believing love, once wrought

into the life and character, "not in word but in power," can survive all shocks of criticism, all questions as to historical events. It needs no evidence of the presence of God, or the work of Christ the spirit, for it is that presence and work itself. It *is* the crucifixion of the flesh, it *is* the new life, it *is* the resurrection of the dead.'

The writer was well aware that the above interpretation of the language of Paul would seem to many good people 'a substitution of moral philosophy for christianity proper.' 'A God who made us and knows us, as from without; a Christ who at a certain time did certain miraculous acts on our behalf, and who now, having left us certain commands, is at the right hand of God exalted, to return again at some future time and judge us according to our obedience to his commands,—these, it may be said, are intelligible objects. There are strong grounds for believing them, and as believed in they influence our actions through fear, and hope, and gratitude. But an immanent God, a God present *in* the believing love of him and the brethren, a Christ within us, a continuous resurrection, —these are mere thoughts of our own; they are not "objective;" if there is nothing else to constrain and restrain us, we are left to ourselves.'

His answer to these difficulties, indicated in the address on *The witness of God*, forms the main subject of that on *Faith*.[1] It is briefly this. The faith or belief which is the essence of all real religion, which religious people represent as constituting the highest spiritual life, and which even those who do not themselves experience it cannot, if they are honest, help

[1] *Works*, vol. iii.

regarding with reverence, is absolutely independent of anything that can be called historical evidence. It is a certain disposition of a man's mind or character, consisting in the consciousness of his potential unity with God, and issuing in the effort to realise this unity in his life. It neither requires nor admits any external proof, for to the man who has it the certainty of God is inseparable from the certainty of himself. Any attempt to derive or account for it from antecedent events is necessarily fallacious, for it will always be found that the events from which it is derived owe their spiritual conclusiveness to the consciousness of the person who appeals to them; it is because his consciousness is already faith that the events are accepted and interpreted by him as evidences of his faith. Nevertheless it is true that the majority of persons calling themselves christians believe their christianity to depend upon the acceptance of statements purporting to record certain past events, in particular the miraculous birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. So far indeed as such persons have really appropriated the essence of christianity, they are better than their own theory; the object of their belief, whatever they may say, is not any past event, but God present and working in them. And so long as they interpret the supposed evidences for their belief in this way, so long as, like Paul and the writer of the fourth gospel, they unconsciously identify the thing signified with the sign, the present death of selfishness and new life to righteousness in their own persons with the physical death and resurrection of Jesus in the past, there is no danger in their state of mind and no reason for attempting to disturb it.

But it is otherwise when the two factors in faith fall asunder, and the attempt begins to represent the spiritual life as an effect of or conclusion from a narrative of past events. The result of such an attempt is dogmatic theology, a phase of the human mind in which, having lost its hold on the original religious experiences of the founders of christianity, it substitutes for them chains of reasoning the same in kind as those by which it would explain or establish any physical or historical phænomenon.

Here begins the opposition between faith and knowledge, which has gradually taken the place of the true scriptural opposition between faith and sense. The dogmatic theologian appeals to certain events as evidence for his religious belief. Events are particular objects of actual or possible experience, and every such object is experienced by us as a constituent of one world, to the other constituents of which it is necessarily related. The world conceived as forming one continuous system is what we mean by 'nature,' and the 'uniformity of nature,' which, whether consciously formulated or not, is the implicit condition of all knowledge, means that everything which happens is an element in a system, and is what it is in virtue of its place in the system. A 'supernatural event,' therefore, would be something which contradicted the conditions under which alone a thing can be an 'event'; it would be something which purported to be an element in a continuous order and yet at the same time to break the continuity of the order, a constituent which was a constituent of nothing; and as long as the truth of religion is supposed to depend upon supernatural events, science is right in

pronouncing it a fiction and in identifying faith with unreason.

On the other hand, faith and knowledge rightly understood cannot come into conflict, for both alike have their source in reason or self-consciousness. The impulse to knowledge is due to the consciousness, however dim, of a reality, 'one, complete, and absolute,' which the self potentially is. The growth of knowledge is the growing realisation of this consciousness, the growing apprehension of the way in which all objects and events are mutually related, and, as so related, make one world. A thing is properly speaking 'known' or 'an object of knowledge' in so far as we are aware of the relations or conditions which make it what it is; but the limitations imposed by our physical organisation, the fact that the reality of any object of knowledge must imply the possibility of sensuous presentation here and now, makes the complete apprehension of these conditions impossible. Thus however far the process of knowledge may have advanced, the idea of a discoverable unity or complete system of relations, which is the motive power in the process, remains always an unrealised idea; it cannot be presented as an object of knowledge, because everything properly so called is particular, i.e. implies other objects, and these again others, and so on indefinitely. The known world, then, is never actually what it is in possibility, and if by 'nature' we understand the known world, we must say that nature and the knowledge of nature never satisfies the demand for complete reality which reason makes and cannot help making. This inextinguishable but unfulfilled demand is faith. Though it finds no object

corresponding to it in experience, it is implied in all experience, and if reality be measured by power of work, it is the most real because the most operative of all things, being in fact no other than the energy of reason or self-consciousness seeking satisfaction under the limitations of a human organisation. This satisfaction it finds, though imperfectly, in knowledge, i.e. in the various activities by which the world is explained, and in a higher degree, though still imperfectly, in moral life, i.e. in the various activities by which the world is not only explained but made better.

Thus what is called 'spiritual' or 'matter of faith' (in the language of religion), or 'metaphysical' (in the language of philosophy), is not something which makes itself known by overriding or interfering with what is 'natural' or 'physical.' The consciousness of one reality and one perfection, which is the consciousness of God, is the source alike of science and of religion, of understanding and of love; in both God communicates himself to us, in both we attain partial freedom from our limitations and come to our true selves. This consciousness is not something which 'proves' God to us, it is itself the presence of God in us. 'You complain that by searching you cannot find out God. No eye can see, or ear hear him. The assertion that he exists cannot be verified like any other matter of fact. But what if that be not because he is so far off, but because he is so near? You cannot know him as you know a particular fact related to you, but neither can you so know yourself; and it is yourself, not as you are, but as in seeking him you become, that is his revelation. "Say not in thine own heart, Who shall ascend into heaven or

descend into the deep," to find God in the height of another world or in the depths of nature. "The word of God is very nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." It is the word that has been made man; that has been uttering itself in all the high endeavour, the long-suffering love, the devoted search for truth, which have so far moralised mankind, and that now speaks in your conscience. It is the God in you which strives for communication with God.'

Thus we are brought round again to the idea which was never far off in the mind of the writer, the idea of God as the 'possible self,' which is gradually attaining reality in the experience of mankind. The mere statement of any such conception can never convey the concrete form which it takes in the mind and life of the person who holds it; nor will it help us much to affiliate it to any of the current terms of theological classification. To the question which is sure to be asked by those who hear or read of Green, Was he a christian? the answer must depend on what 'to be a christian' means. If it means to believe that every man has God in him, that religion is the continual death of a lower and coming to life of a higher self, and that these truths were more vividly realised in thought and life by Jesus of Nazareth and some of his followers than by any other known men, then without doubt he was a christian. If it means to believe that the above truths depend upon the fact that Jesus was born and died under conditions impossible to other human beings, then equally without doubt he was not a christian. If he had been asked, why then he so habitually used the language of orthodox christianity, he would probably have

answered that language is not the private property of any man or set of men, and that much of the phraseology of Paul and the fourth gospel, though freely adopted by the orthodox, is quite incompatible with some of the doctrines of orthodoxy. But the truth is that the distinction of orthodox and heterodox, with all its attendant babel of controversy, had but little interest for him; not because he wished to shirk unpleasant questions, nor because he was not clear as to what he believed, but because he cared about the reality of religion and not about its accessories, and was convinced that its reality does not depend upon its dogmatic expression. He had indeed strong natural prejudices, which attracted him to certain forms of religious experience and repelled him from certain others; but he was quite free from the gladiatorial spirit which regards opinions, not as vehicles of truth or falsehood, but as weapons for attack or defence. If people (to use one of his favourite phrases) 'had the root of the matter in them,' he cared little that it branched out here and there into conclusions which personally he might consider heterogeneous.

The enemy which he dreaded for religion was not either orthodoxy or unorthodoxy, but selfishness and indifference. In rejecting the doctrine that spiritual life depends upon the belief in miracles, he was not reluctantly abandoning, in deference to the requirements of modern science and culture, a cherished and once tenable position; he was recovering, as he conceived, the position which the true genius of religion had always held, and which was only weakened by the irrelevant or fictitious outworks of theological argumentation. But he would readily have admitted

what the history of mankind abundantly shows, that ignorance and superstition may coexist with great and genuine spirituality of character and life. If a man's consciousness of God is awakened by the occurrence of unusual physical phænomena, or if, following the same impulse to find God in nature, he sustains that consciousness by imagining physical impossibilities, this is only one of many illustrations of the confused and imperfect way in which we receive the communication of the divine spirit; and he warns us emphatically against 'rashly tampering' with such a state of mind.[1] The weak point in it, as he conceived, is not that it believes God to be the cause of nature, but that it misunderstands the sense in which this is true. Two events are causally connected when they reciprocally imply one another, and such reciprocity is only possible if the two things are one as well as two, one thing acting and reacting on itself. That 'everything has a cause' means that everything is a particular form of reciprocal action and reaction, each agent and reagent being indifferently regarded as the cause or the effect of the other. If we say that God is related to nature as cause to effect, it must be in the sense in which 'the cause is the effect in unity';[2] in other words, we must conceive of God as the single indivisible but self-differentiating energy, of the eternal action and reaction of which all events are partial forms. From such a point of view the assertion that God causes any particular phænomenon 'is not exactly false, but turns out on strict analysis to be unmeaning';[3] for in whatever sense he is the

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 244. [2] *Ib.* vol. i. p. 130.
[3] *Ib.* vol. iii. p. 264.

cause of any one phænomenon, he is the cause of all. If then a belief in the supernatural means that the full explanation of any natural event, involving as it does the system of the universe, cannot be exhibited by any human intelligence, it is true, but then it gives no ground for calling one event more or less supernatural than another; in any other sense it can only mean a belief that the energy which creates the order of nature 'reveals itself by annulling the order in which it is implied and apart from which it has no reality,'[1] in a word, that God uncreates himself.

It was this misconception of the relation between God and nature that seemed to him to have produced the dogmas relating to the person of Christ. To him the incarnation and resurrection could only mean that the divine spirit, the spirit whose activity is an eternal death into life and life out of death, is perpetually being manifested, in various degrees and under various forms, in all that is good in human experience. He believed indeed that in Jesus of Nazareth this spirit was present in an exceptional way, but he deprecated the attempt to reconstruct from uncertain documents the precise details of his teaching and character, contenting himself with gathering their most salient features from such sources as the sermon on the mount, and preferring to dwell more at length on the form in which they are presented in the Pauline epistles and the fourth gospel. In these writings he found the beginning of that fusion of ideas to which so much both of the power and of the degeneration of christianity may be traced. Paul represents the bodily death and resurrection of Jesus

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 128.

as in some sense the condition of the moral death and regeneration which he experienced in his own person; the 'putting off of the flesh' which consists in deliverance from selfishness is identified in his mind with the putting off which consists in the dissolution of the body, and the putting on of the 'new' or spiritual man with the assumption of a 'glorified body.' Similarly the fourth gospel insists at one moment that God 'became flesh' in Jesus, that is, was manifested in a bodily form to the senses, at another that he is only manifested in a spiritual life and only apprehensible to a spiritual consciousness. This fusion of the physical and the spiritual results from the attempt to conceive the revelation of God as having taken place once for all within the limits of an individual human life. Religion cannot dispense with such attempts, for 'all religion (as distinct alike from thought and morality) consists in the presentation of the objects of thought under the forms of imagination. The value of the religion depends on the adequacy of the imagined form to the object thought of (to which it never can be quite adequate).' The fourth gospel has fulfilled 'the special function of presenting the highest thought about God in language of the imagination, and has thus become the source of the highest religion'; for the most nearly adequate way in which we can imagine God is 'as a man in whom that which seems to be the end of moral discipline and progress has been fully attained, viz. the union of the will with God, perfect unselfishness, the direction of desire to ends which one rational being can consciously share with all other rational beings. Such a "man" would not be a man as

we know man, because the conditions of human existence in this world are such that this end can never be completely attained. Thus the religious imagination of God as Christ has to become the imagination of him as a "glorified" Christ; a Christ such as Jesus of Nazareth was potentially, not actually; a Christ "put to death in the flesh," but alive and giving life in the spirit.'[1] It is by giving such an interpretation to the person of Christ that the writer of the fourth gospel 'has for ever taken it out of the region of history and of the doubts that surround all past events,' and has made the worship of Jesus 'amount to the worship, through love and knowledge, of God as a spiritual being, immanent in the moral life of man.'

On the other hand, in proportion as men have been incapable of understanding the spiritual element in this gospel, they have fallen back upon the other, the sensuous and miraculous. The presence of God in Jesus has been supposed to have shown itself in the fact that he was free from the ordinary conditions of physical birth and death, and the incarnation and resurrection to be past events, the acceptance of which upon evidence constitutes salvation; 'Christ,' as he pregnantly expresses it,[2] 'has been gradually externalised and mystified,' taken out of the consciousness and life of the believer and put into 'objective facts' which cannot contain him except by becoming no facts at all. The same inability to conceive God except by the aid of sensuous presentation seemed to him to have given rise to the notion 'that the work of the quickening spirit is not complete without the raising of the body. Paul's doctrine on this point

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 219. [2] *Ib.* pp. 215 and 242.

commends itself to the conscience of most christians, because by the "unbodied spirit" they understand something out of relation to the world. Some constituents of human worth, they think, would be wanting to such a spirit. The "glorified body" represents to them those relations, which make us what we are as men, in some higher form.'[1] In this case as in the former the value of the imaginative form depends on how far it is adequate to the reality which it suggests. The symbolisation of thought takes place in infinitely different ways in different persons. To some minds the tones of a voice, the features of a face, the lines and movements of a figure, are the natural medium through which they focus to themselves a personality which they love or reverence, while to others it is necessary to get rid of such sensible reminiscences in order to recover the whole of which they are fragments. Green was by no means unobservant or unappreciative of physical characteristics, but they did not supply the material with which his constructive imagination most naturally worked. It was on the typical products of mankind rather than on the individual producers that he liked to dwell, and in contemplating the organisation of societies, the forms of laws and institutions, or the structure of thought in systems of knowledge and morality, his mind found the imaginative expression and sustenance which others get from the sights and sounds of art or nature. The passage just quoted continues as follows; 'Moral life is a process in which we become less and less mere parts of the world, determined by natural influences, but not thereby

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 205.

less related to the world. That relation to it which consists in understanding, and love determined by understanding, gradually takes the place of that which consists in animal affection. The "glorified life" must be thought of as the completion of this process. A renewed "embodiment," if it means anything, would be but a return to that condition in which we are but parts of nature, a condition from which the moral life is already a partial deliverance.'

The words 'but not thereby less related to the world' are here all-important. Most of the many misconceptions of 'spirituality' may be traced to the notion that it is attained by eliminating, leaving behind, and transcending what is 'natural,' instead of by absorbing, using, and developing it. Bodily sensibility and want do not perish in intelligence and love; they pass into them as the lower passes into the higher form of energy. And conversely, in understanding or in loving we are not less in contact with the real world than in the feeling of touch or of hunger, but infinitely more. It is in this sense that he speaks elsewhere[1] of 'moral self-abandonment' as being 'the completion of all the processes of the world'; the self-conscious spirit which works itself out in the various forms of physical energy seemed to him to reach the highest power known to man in the unselfishness which is for ever striving to make the world better. And if we would try to conceive a perfectly spiritual life, he would have us do it rather by thinking of what we are when we love and understand, than by picturing our bodily conditions indefinitely purged or amplified. His view of death

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 214.

seems to result from the same line of thought; it is 'the transition by which the highest form of nature, i.e. the highest realisation of spirit, short of its realisation in itself, passes into a perfectly adequate realisation, i.e. a spiritual one.'[1] As the moral life of each individual is a process in which the animal activities are continually passing out of themselves and finding their 'completion' in human ends, so death is not the interruption of a life which can only be resumed by a fresh 'embodiment,' but the consummation of the process by which the higher life uses up the lower and in so doing attains freedom. It is in this light that he interprets the saying of Christ that unless he went away from his disciples 'the comforter' could not come to them; 'while present to sense he could not communicate himself spiritually.'[2] And it is only an extension of the same view from the individual man to the whole of the physical world when, in Pauline language, he speaks of nature as 'groaning and travailing after God, dying because it cannot contain him, yet waiting for, and leading up to, his manifestation.'[3]

The impressions produced on many people by such language as this will probably be summed up in the judgment that the writer was a 'mystic.' If this vague phrase merely means one who believes in some other reality than what he can see or touch, it applies to all religious men; but if it be understood to imply a general cloudiness of mind, or an inability to estimate ordinary evidence, or a belief in occult properties of matter, it has no application to Green. He was the last man whom anyone could think of calling a

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 160. [2] *Ib.* p. 210. [3] *Ib.* p. 234.

visionary. It would indeed be hard to say at what points his religious beliefs made themselves most felt in his life, for he seldom spoke of them, and except a general seriousness there was little to suggest them in his manner or bearing. A pervading religious consciousness does not necessarily show itself in moments of observable exaltation; when and how frequently such moments are experienced is largely a matter of temperament; to one man they come only when he is in church, to another when he is in battle, to another when he is in love. The rare individuals who 'whether they eat or drink do all for the glory of God' are often unrecognisable by their contemporaries, and when recognised often seem to them either madmen or impostors. There was nothing in Green to suggest either the one or the other, nothing ecstatic or stormy or mysterious, nothing of the air of a man who had a 'new religion' to communicate. His religion was christianity, and 'the roots of christianity' as he conceived it 'are as old as mankind.' 'We cannot say of it, lo, here it is, or lo, there; it is now, but was not then. We go backward, but we cannot reach its source; we look forward, but we cannot foresee its final power.' He believed indeed that 'the "visible church" of one age is never essentially the same as that of the next, and that it is only in word, or to the intellectually dead, that the creed of the present is the same as the creed of the past'; and he looked forward to a time when the religious needs of men 'will be rather met by the sympathies of a society breathing the christian spirit than by the propositions of an anthropomorphic theology.' But with all his insistence upon the

inward and personal nature of religion, he was no despiser of existing ordinances. 'We cannot afford,' he says, 'to individualise ourselves even in respect of outward symbols. We do wrong to ourselves and them, if we allow any intellectual vexation at the mode in which they may be presented to us to prevent us from their due use.' He did not disguise from himself that 'an inability to adopt the received dogmatic expression of christian faith' necessarily entailed a certain amount of 'estrangement from christian society,' but he urged that the estrangement should not be unnecessarily widened.

Thus though he saw objections to using the words of a creed 'in any other meaning than that which they are ordinarily understood to bear,' he did not admit the same of prayers. 'So long as our prayers express the effort after a higher life, recognised as proceeding from, and only to be satisfied by, the grace of God, the theological formulæ in which they are clothed are of little importance. The fact that others who use them have beliefs as to historical occurrences which we do not share, need not prevent us from sharing with them what is not the expression of an historical belief but of a spiritual aspiration.' Prayer in this sense does not look for any external answer; 'it will be its own answer, even as virtuous action is its own reward. Prayer indeed, if of the right sort, is already incipient action; or, more properly, it is a moral action which has not yet made its outward sign.' It finds its 'outward sign' or fulfilment in unselfish activity, in 'the life of charity,' and in this life he saw the one unfailing mainstay of religious belief in those who cannot adopt the traditional

dogmatic expression of it. It was, he thought, one of the misfortunes of university life, 'that it tends to make us overrate the importance of opinions as compared with the practical principles of the inner life; and even though as a matter of theory we avoid the mistake, yet our position and employment allow us few openings into that active life of charity in which christian faith is most readily realised. Even here, however, in our intercourse with each other, there are opportunities for us "to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" nor, because much of our intellectual activity is the result of mere curiosity or emulation, should we forget that there is such a thing as a pursuit of truth, in principle identical with the striving after God which animates the moral life. Those of us to whom university life is merely an avenue to the great world, would do well betimes to seek opportunities of co-operation with those simple christians whose creed, though we may not be able exactly to adopt it, is to them the natural expression of a spirit which at the bottom of our heart we recognise as higher than our own. In the everyday life of christian citizenship, in its struggle against ignorance and vice, such opportunities are readily forthcoming.' [1]

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 241, 251, 273–276.

CHAPTER VIII

CIVIC ACTIVITY

If after this review of his metaphysical and religious principles we would see how Green himself tried to live 'the life of christian citizenship,' we must turn back a few years and take up again the thread of events. His position as a tutor does not indeed offer much material for narrative, for he seldom took an active part in university politics, and the ordinary administration of a college consists of details which, however important in themselves, cannot be made interesting or even intelligible to an outsider. In 1866 he had been put on the delegacy for managing the Oxford Local Examinations, and he was one of the promoters of a scheme by which in 1867 exhibitions were offered at Balliol to candidates who had distinguished themselves in those or similar examinations, with the object of helping men who would otherwise be unable to bear the expenses of a university education. A house was taken in St. Giles' street where the exhibitioners were lodged, and he left his rooms in college to preside over it. In the following year he welcomed the statute by which students were allowed to come to the university without belonging to a college; 'Balliol,' he thought, 'will avail itself of the opportunity to undertake the instruction of a large number of out-

students.' This expectation was not fulfilled, but the audiences at his own lectures were considerably increased about this time through a combination of Balliol with New College, which was afterwards extended to include other colleges. In the same year he was instrumental in getting compulsory attendance at chapel abolished, and a roll-call substituted for those who preferred it. His letters in these years show that his old enemy sleeplessness was again harassing him; 'I am so poor a creature in nerves and stomach,' he writes in 1868, 'that, though silent and abstemious enough, I am always the worse for dinner-parties'; and the resulting depression breaks out in the remark, 'I am always chafing against necessary work, but at least it staves off melancholy.' Under these circumstances the election of Jowett to the mastership in 1870, while it rejoiced the heart of him and his friends, made the responsibilities of his position weigh heavily on him. 'This,' he writes, 'practically devolves the whole subordinate management of the college on me at a very difficult time.' 'We shall have a *régime* of strong "personal government," and in many respects shall be the better for it. But a "constitutional opposition" is desirable, and I don't feel much energy or inclination for it.' A short experience of the new *régime* partly confirmed and partly alleviated his apprehensions. 'Instead of the two hours daily which I used to spend over the papers during the vacation, I can scarcely find a quarter of an hour for them now; and what is worse, there is a lot that I feel ought to be done for the proper working of the college which yet I cannot do. Meanwhile I find comfort from the admirable conduct of the new

master, which is really without a flaw, all minor defects having disappeared with his elevation.'

He was soon to find "comfort" of a more intimate and sustaining kind. In January, 1871, he became engaged to a lady to whom in his heart he had long been attached, Miss Charlotte Symonds, daughter of Dr. Symonds of Clifton, and sister to John Addington Symonds, one of his oldest friends. All minds are unlocked by love, and some extracts from letters to his future wife enable us for once to penetrate the reserve which he habitually maintained about himself and his feelings. 'When I am at my best I am a very genial and joyous person. Ask anyone who has been with me during a long vacation whether it is not so. . . . Almost from boyhood, behind all anxieties, I have had a consciousness analogous to that which our religious ancestors used to describe as "being at peace" or "under grace." As the philosophers say, I have had a great interest in the "objective world," regarding it almost instinctively as a manifestation of God, and letting it have its way with me without question as to the "state of my soul" or as to whether I was making the best of myself. This has not tended to make me either a more useful or a more complete man, but it has bound my days together with "natural piety," and made my life, on the whole, though void of active enjoyment, and subject to some great trials from without, very peaceful. If I am rather a melancholy bird, given to physical fatigue and depression, yet I have never known for a moment what it was to be weary of life, as the youth of this age are fond of saying that they are. The world has always seemed very good to me. I have never felt ajar

with it, and hence have had no varied or tragic inward experience.'

Dr. Symonds was very ill at the time of their engagement, and his daughter was wrapped up in nursing him. The following passages are from letters written to her just before and after his death. 'Compare Romans viii. 16 and 26,[1] the greatest verses in the bible, very good "to feed on," as Cromwell would have said. You must cultivate a "waiting spirit," as he again would have said. If the last hour is coming, let us try to think of living in years to come as your father would have wished us to live.' 'I think of how impossible it is, at least to our present consciousness, to make up for what death takes away. I never needed to be reminded by the preachers of "the fleeting nature of temporal blessings." Somehow, though I never yet knew any great personal loss, the sense of death has always been about me from my childhood, and to look through death I find the great permanent trial of reason. It can be done, but sometimes "the flesh is weak," and it is in overcoming the "spectacle of mortality" that I am apt to find it weakest. To have been with you during this trial has done me a great deal of good, and in spite of the present sadness gives me more peace in thinking of death. It helps me to see that after all there is no waste in a good man's death. Your father's character, through his death, re-lives more strongly in you than it could during his life, and doubtless through the eyes

[1] 'The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. . . . Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.'

of God, with whom he is, he sees this; even as we in virtue of the same spiritual sight, though more faintly, can still look across the grave to him. That is a wrong saying about the dead, "we shall go to him, but he will not return to us." It should be the other way. We can go to him at intervals and by effort, as the weakness of our animal nature allows, but he is for ever returning to us.' 'To lose the enjoyment of one's own present happiness from the thought that it is perpetually disappearing, is really a sign that one is hugging it too much. It is well to be happy, but the man in moral health does not think about his happiness, though a great deal about the persons that cause it. As soon as we begin to live consciously for happiness instead of for the persons or interests that make us happy, the happiness itself is vitiated; and when I find myself much affected by reflection on the fleeting nature of happiness, though it is supposed to be philosophic, I know that it is morbid, and that I am really brooding unwholesomely over my own pleasures.' 'In thinking about a future life, you may find it of help to reflect that even in this life sensations are to what we experience through them only as words to the ideas which come to us when we read or hear the words. . . . I think the best notion we can form of the state after death is that it is one in which all the spiritual result of our present sensuous life remains in a higher and freer form; in which all that the good have been to each other by means of sensuous symbols here, they will still be, though the symbols are different. . . . Don't you sometimes feel that communion "spirit to spirit" may be purer and freer when it is not "face to face"? Such a feeling soon becomes

unreal, and must do so while we are in nature, but it has its value.'

He was married July 1, 1871, and his life from this time, though latterly marred by ill health, was brighter and more serene. The cultivation and social gifts of his wife made it easier for him to expand in company, and hospitality became less of an effort; he worked on at his philosophy, she at helping and making friends of the poor of Oxford, the work which she best liked and which he best liked her to do. In April, 1872, he was re-elected to a fellowship at Balliol, and continued to teach there with increasing effect. It was perhaps inevitable that as the influence of his ideas became stronger, and his phraseology more fixed and more familiar by repetition, crude forms of his theories obtained a wider circulation, and any failures of his pupils in the university examinations attracted more attention. Always liable as he was to mistrust the value of his teaching, he felt acutely the discredit which he might seem to be bringing upon philosophy, and the coolness or opposition of some of those with whom originally he had been most in sympathy. But if this sometimes cast a shade across his work as a college tutor, his new position as a householder gave him greater opportunities of civic activity.

His first appearance on a political platform had been in 1867, when the Oxford Reform League held a meeting to consider the reform bill which the conservative government had just introduced. 'My speech,' he writes, 'was very successful. At least I spoke for half an hour amid the great applause of the citizens, and without saying anything that I afterwards regretted. It was very unlike my old

experience at the Union, where I used to be always groaned at and interrupted.' The resolution which he had to move was, 'That this meeting, considering the constitution of the present house of commons, is convinced of the necessity of the continued agitation of the question of reform.' Speaking of the opposition to be expected from the capitalists and the educated class, he said, 'We have reached that stage in our history which Lord Macaulay, I think, is said to have prophesied, when the conflict is no longer between the house of commons and the crown or the lords, but between the people and the house of commons. . . . I speak within the mark when I say that four-fifths of the lower house are either great landowners or belong to the families of great landowners. . . . The English aristocracy, we are told, is not an exclusive aristocracy. In one sense that is true, and that is what makes it such an awkward customer to deal with. A great capitalist generally ends by buying a great estate. When the recollections of the counter have sufficiently passed away, he or his son is made a baronet. Perhaps in the next generation the family mounts a step higher still. Thus the oligarchy has a constant means of bribing the capitalists to its support. This corruption is eating out the heart of the upper commercial class, and it is but the highest outcome of a flunkeyism which pervades English society from the top to the bottom, and is incompatible with any healthy political life. The English gentleman, we are sometimes told, is the noblest work of God, but one gentleman makes many snobs. As to the educated class, it is hard to know what that means. Everyone who wears a

good coat, or reads the *Times* or the *Saturday Review*, believes himself to belong to the educated class. If it means those who share in the higher education as represented by the universities, we know something of them. We see them here at close quarters in the making. I should be the last person to say anything against the higher education in the true sense, which it is my business to the best of my power to impart. But the present system of higher education in England is a protected and exclusive system. It is so in consequence of the artificial system of expense which is kept up at the universities, and of the endowments —the unequally distributed endowments—of the established church. Thus those who share in the higher education, while they gain little enough learning by it, gain a great deal of the spirit of protection and exclusion which it fosters. We must make up our minds then to the opposition of the capitalists and the educated class.'

A passage in which he defended John Bright is also very characteristic. 'If he had not kept his light burning through the thick darkness of the Palmerstonian *régime*, I know not whether the nation would have emerged from its political apathy during this generation. For many years he stood virtually alone,

> "Against example good,
> Against allurement, custom, and a world
> Offended, fearless of reproach and scorn."

This is the man who the "educated liberals" tell us is not a statesman. I want to know who shall have most credit for statesmanship, men who "take upon them the mystery of things, as if they were God's

spies," and who yet cannot see one inch beyond their nose, men who for these years past have been writing themselves down asses in prophecies which the next week's news refuted, or the man who throughout his career, whether in regard to the Crimean war, or India, or America, has showed a foresight that has been verified by events. They call him a demagogue, but whom does that name best fit? Men whose trade it is to prophesy smooth things to anyone who has aught to give, or one who has been a butt for more insult and contumely than anyone in this generation? They say he is a revolutionist, when they themselves advocate a system which empties the country of its yeomen, the natural support of true conservatism, and by treating five-sixths of the people as political aliens, leads, by inexorable necessity, to revolution.'

About a year afterwards, in February, 1868, when the conservative bill had become law, he proposed the toast of 'parliamentary reform' at a dinner of the Wellington Lodge of Odd Fellows, Goldwin Smith being in the chair. Referring to the current saying that the government by their measure had 'dished the whigs,' he said; 'On such a question it is idle to talk of who wins or who loses. The winner is no party, whig, conservative, or radical. The whole nation wins by a measure which makes us for the first time one people. We who were reformers from the beginning, always said that the enfranchisement of the people was an end in itself. We said, and we were much derided for saying so, that citizenship only makes the moral man; that citizenship only gives that self-respect, which is the true basis of respect for others, and without which there is no lasting social

order or real morality. If we were asked what result we looked for from the enfranchisement of the people, we said, that is not the present question; untie the man's legs, and then it will be time to speculate how he will walk.' Among the tasks which lay before the reformed parliament he dwelt specially on the reform of the land laws. 'Our present system of great estates, as I believe, gives a false set to society from top to bottom. It causes exaggerated luxury at the top, flunkeyism in the middle, poverty and recklessness at the bottom. There is no remedy for this poverty and recklessness as long as those who live on the land have no real and permanent interest in it. . . . It is this debased population that gluts the labour-market, and constantly threatens to infect the class of superior workmen, who can only secure themselves, as I believe, by such a system of protection as is implied in the better sort of trades-union. This is an evil which no individual benevolence can cure. Ten thousand soup-kitchens are unavailing against it. It can only be cured by such legislation as will give the agricultural labourer some real interest in the soil.'

Among those who appealed to the new constituencies in 1868 were several Oxford liberals, and his next address was delivered to a meeting of agricultural labourers at Wootton on behalf of G. S. Brodrick, who was standing for Woodstock. His subject was 'The condition of the labouring classes, what it is and what it might be.' 'I spoke for an hour,' he says, 'on the effect of bad laws upon their condition, and (a harder task) on the possible good to be done them by good laws. They seemed to understand me better than I expected.' The meeting was held in a

'sort of cart-house,' and 'sometimes my best sentences were greeted by the neighing of a horse.' Of his friends who were standing for parliament, none were successful except his former private tutor, C. S. Parker; 'not however,' he remarks, 'because they were "philosophers," but because, being unknown and without local connexion, they were trying on "purity principles" for boroughs either corrupt or virtually close.' 'The vehement tory partisanship shown by the clergy at this election, though to some extent effective for its present purpose, will,' he thinks, 'damage the church very much in the long run.' The new ministry did not altogether please him. 'I wish,' he writes at the end of 1868, 'that Bright had either not been prevailed on to join it, or had insisted on having more backing within it. I much dread Lowe's influence in it. Among other things he will probably prevent the government from undertaking legislation on the basis of the report of the Schools Inquiry Commission. He has published a vehement pamphlet against the said report, and on the side of leaving middle-class education to take care of itself on the simple "private advantage" or supply and demand system. I have not seen it, but am told that he falls specially foul of certain passages in my report. As I wrote them with conscious antagonism to his views, I have no right to complain, but I heartily wish on public grounds that he were out of the way. Indeed for some years I have regarded him as the most mischievous politician going. The worst of it is,' he adds humorously, 'that I share this opinion, though on quite different grounds, with Dr. Pusey.' This was not the only collision into which he was brought by

his report. In May of the same year he writes, 'I am beginning to get angry letters from private schoolmasters, complaining of the "violent animus" which I exhibit against them.'

The year 1870 brought elementary education to the front. On January 27 a meeting was held at Oxford to consider the best means of promoting it, and he spoke in favour of the program of the National Education League, with its three points of 'compulsory attendance, the maintenance of the schools out of the public funds, and unsectarian instruction.' By the last he explains that he does not mean secular education. 'I am not the least frightened by the dictum of the pedants, that unsectarian christianity cannot be taught.' His eyes, he declared, had been opened on the subject by reading fourteen years before an essay by Dr. Temple, 'the material parts of which were embodied in the scheme of the League.' When Forster's bill came, it did not at all satisfy him; in respect of compulsion he thought it 'wholly insufficient,' nor was his opinion changed when eight years later he reviewed its operation in two lectures delivered in the Liberal Hall at Oxford on the elementary school system of England.[1] 'The authors of the act,' he there complains, 'seem only to have looked at one of the faults of the system already in operation. They allowed their attention to be concentrated solely on the palpable fact of its insufficiency for providing schools in the less favoured districts, and in their hurry to remedy this evil, did not consider that the plan which should supply schools most quickly might not, in the long run, be the best

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 413.

for the education of the country.' The chief defects in the act he considers to be that it did not make school boards universal, and ('a point which has been very little noticed') that it 'left denominationalism undisturbed in its possession of the training colleges.' The provisions in regard to religious instruction he thinks fair enough, and regrets that 'the nonconformists, having a real grievance, should have put it on the wrong ground by objecting to them.' He looks forward to a time when 'it will be considered that the state, by long continuance of a subsidy to voluntary schools, far exceeding the voluntary contributions to them, has fairly bought out all private claims to their use, and is entitled to regulate them as it likes.' In the meantime he advocates an extension of the powers of existing school-boards in towns, by which they should be enabled to superintend, not only the attendance, but the general system of instruction (the religious excepted) in voluntary schools. In this way might be avoided some of the waste of power resulting from the fact that each parish in a town has its own school, 'worked entirely without reference to another parochial school a few hundred yards off,' and that one master consequently has to teach pupils in all stages of knowledge and ignorance. The rational plan, where there are several schools in a small radius, would be 'to combine the more advanced scholars in one, those of standard IV. in another, and so on with the other standards, each group having the individual attention of one or more masters.' Something, though less, of the same kind might be done in the country by district boards corresponding to unions or larger areas. He had

hopes himself of getting on the school-board which, after considerable opposition, was established at Oxford in 1871, but it was not until the second election in 1874 that he succeeded. As however sufficient school accommodation had been provided by voluntary efforts during the term of grace allowed by the act, the work of the board was confined to promoting attendance, and there was comparatively little scope for those who would naturally have been most active upon it.

Next to popular education the social subject which interested him the most was temperance. He seems to have begun his decisive connexion with the movement in its favour in 1872, when he joined the United Kingdom Alliance, of which he afterwards was made a vice-president. In 1875 he set up a coffee tavern in St. Clement's, and when in the same year the Oxford Diocesan branch of the Church of England Temperance Society was instituted, he was induced to be its treasurer in spite of his protestations that he was 'a questionable churchman and little known to the clergy.' The following year he became president of the Oxford Band of Hope Temperance Union. His views upon the legislative side of the subject may be gathered from a paper which he read[1] at the conference of the United Kingdom Alliance held at Oxford in February, 1882. Assuming the desirability of local option as an abstract principle, he there discusses the best way of giving effect to it. 'There have been three main proposals on the subject. According to one of these the functions now exercised by the licensing magistrates would be transferred with more or less extension to the town councils of boroughs,

[1] Printed in the *Oxford Chronicle* for Feb. 4, 1882.

and to those corresponding municipal bodies which we hope shortly to see constituted in the counties. According to another, these powers would be given, not to the general municipal authority, but to boards elected specially for the purpose. A third plan would leave the licensing power in the hands of the magistrates so long as any licences at all were issued, but would give the ratepayers of each locality the right to decide by a certain majority and under certain conditions how many licences should be granted, or whether any at all.'

The main advantage of the first plan seems to him to be this; 'if it is conceded that, in the event of licences being withdrawn from well-conducted public houses, compensation would be due to the owners, (a concession which there are very strong grounds for refusing to make), the compensation could be more easily arranged through the action of municipal bodies than in any other way. On the other hand there are grave objections to placing the licensing power in the hand of town councils. We never should get a municipal election taken on the liquor question pure and simple. All sorts of other issues, affecting not merely local administration but general politics, would inevitably be mixed up with it. It would only be when excitement upon the liquor question came to supersede all other local or national interests, that we should get town councils prepared to go so far in dealing with the question as the ratepayers really desire. Meanwhile that the judicial functions now exercised by magistrates (functions which must be of the greatest importance, so long as the licensing system continues, and in the

exercise of which impartiality is the prime requisite) should be transferred to town councils, would be a very doubtful advantage.'

To the plan of specially elected licensing boards he has no objection, provided that 'powers be given them for the suppression of existing licences, which practically the magistrates do not at present possess. But I am not sure that the principle of local control might not even more advantageously be carried out, without an alteration of the present licensing authority, by an extension of the plan which the liberal government of 1871 proposed. That bill, I have always thought, only needed the principle of the permissive veto to be engrafted upon it to form the best possible settlement of the question. Existing licences were given ten years to run. During that period they were only to be forfeited for offences against the law, but the bill proposed to make the law regulating the conduct of public houses much more stringent than it then was, or than it has since become; and what is more important, it proposed more effectual means for enforcing the laws than we have ever actually had. At the end of this period the ratepayers of each district would have had full control over the number of licences to be allowed, subject to the proviso that one be left for every thousand inhabitants in towns, and one for every five hundred in rural districts. In Oxford, for instance, where the licensed houses now are considerably over three hundred, it would have empowered the ratepayers, at the end of ten years from the passing of the act, to decide that for the future there should be only forty. We may think that this proposal was not so thoroughgoing as we should wish. But it will

be well for us to reflect how much better our position would now have been if that bill (to which the Alliance at the time, I fear, gave very lukewarm support) had been already passed and maintained in force. I cannot help thinking that when we come to think out the best means for giving effect to the principle of local option, now twice affirmed by the house of commons, we shall find them in following the lines of Mr. Bruce's bill of 1871.'

The question of the liquor traffic was the only one upon which he was ever drawn into anything like political controversy. Indignant at a speech made at the end of 1872 by Sir William Harcourt, then one of the members for Oxford, which seemed to him 'to pooh-pooh the drinking evil altogether and to run down all legislative attempts to check it,' he wrote to the *Oxford Chronicle*, announcing that 'a representative who bid for the votes of the publicans could not have his.' A letter which he received from Sir William drew from him an answer gentler in tone but not less explicit. 'I must say plainly that I do not think there is a greater mischief a public man of authority can do than to depreciate the magnitude of this particular evil. It sounds rather impertinent in me to say so to one who has had so much more experience of the world than I have had, but I can scarcely think that, if you had seen much of the life of the working classes at close quarters, you could have had the heart to speak as you did. Even here in Oxford, which has of late been strangely trying to get up a reputation for sobriety, anyone who goes below the respectable classes finds the degradation and hopeless waste which this vice produces meet

him at every turn. It is idle to say that education and comfortable habits will check the vice in time. The education of the families of the sober has no effect on the families of the drunken. Unless the vice is first checked by a dead lift of the national conscience, education and comfortable habits are impossible in those very families which are to be saved from drunkenness by them. Meanwhile an immense commercial interest is fattening upon the evil, and of course doing all it can to disguise it. All those whom this interest can influence, the rowdy "pot-house" party which prevails in all boroughs, and is specially strong in Oxford, of course catch eagerly at every utterance likely to command attention, which may put us off the scent of the nuisance which they themselves constitute. They were the people who cheered you when you denounced the licensing bill. If any expression in my letter seemed to impute to you an unworthy motive, I gladly withdraw it. But the motive of a speech is one thing, its effect is another; and the effect of yours was simply to raise the spirits of the men who a few months ago were screaming about the streets and breaking windows to the tune of "Britons never shall be slaves."'

Though naturally abstemious, he was not originally a total abstainer; but personal grounds combined with public ones to bring the subject of temperance home to him. The disastrous career of his elder brother constantly weighed upon his mind, and the conviction that the political morale of the poor was being sapped by drink came later to reinforce his private experience. A friend recalls that 'looking back from the time of the conservative reaction

in 1874, he once said, "We held our heads too high during Gladstone's ministry. We thought the working classes had made more moral progress than they really had." He dwelt with great disappointment on the use made by the workmen of their half-holiday and their shorter hours. I believe it was this strong disappointment that fixed his attention upon the temperance question above all others.' This impression is fully borne out by his words on another occasion. He had long felt the want in Oxford of a proper room for political meetings and discussions, which it was the custom to hold in public houses, and he was an active promoter of the scheme which resulted in the building of the Liberal Hall. Speaking as chairman of the meeting which in September, 1876, finally gave shape to it, he said, 'I have always felt that the defeat of the liberals at the last election to a great extent served them right. Ever since the great majority they obtained in 1868, they had been living in a sort of fool's paradise. While the government was at its work in a spirit in which perhaps no government had been before, nothing was done to teach the newly enfranchised people in political matters. What was the result? The country had been passing through a phase of sudden and unexampled commercial prosperity, and political enthusiasm had been lost in what I may call a general riot of luxury, in which nearly all classes had their share. The money and the beer flowed freely. Money quickly made was quickly spent, and it seemed as if all classes were disposed, not exactly to rest and be thankful, but at least to take their ease, eat, drink, and be merry. In this state of things, in the middle of this general

political inertness, came the election of 1874. It found the liberal party everywhere disorganised. It found the constituencies politically asleep, but it found what are called the vested interests, which the late government had harassed, alive and vindictive.'

The corollary of this, upon which he was never tired of insisting, was that the liberals of Oxford should keep their eyes upon the future, and be educating themselves to retrieve the disaster of 1874 when the opportunity came. This was the burden of his speech in November, 1876, after he had been elected by the North Ward to represent them on the town council. 'I hope,' he said, 'I shall not be thought an ungenial person if I say that I hope you will dwell rather more on the struggle in the future than on the past triumph. There has been running in my head for the last few hours the old text of scripture, "Let not him that buckleth on his armour boast himself as he that taketh it off."' But his election on this occasion had more than a political interest. It was the first time that a college tutor had been a town councillor, and he may be fairly said to have laid the foundations of the bridge, since carried on by others, which is gradually spanning the gulf between the city and the university of Oxford. In addressing his supporters before the election he had deprecated the introduction of party politics into the council. 'He was,' he said, 'a liberal by conviction,' but 'he knew that there were many conservatives quite as anxious for the good of the people as he was, but in Oxford at present they were hampered by their following. With old-fashioned, decorous conservatism he had great sympathy, but not with the new style of rowdy

toryism. . . . If elected he should always bear in mind that an extra penny in the pound on the rating meant a great deal more to poor men than to him, and should remember the rule, "be just before you are generous." But, under this restriction, he should not shrink from a wise outlay in the cause of health and education. He had paid great attention to schemes for raising boys from elementary schools to higher ones, and would try to make the proposed grammar school useful for this purpose.'

The 'proposed grammar school' or high school, as it was eventually called, was of all public objects that in which he took the keenest interest, and to which he gave the most material support. Sufficient reference has already [1] been made to the motives by which he was influenced. When the scheme had taken practical shape at the end of 1877, he contributed 200*l.* to the building, and founded a yearly scholarship of 12*l.* tenable at the school by boys from the elementary schools of Oxford. Whether his far-reaching views of what the new school might do for the town are destined to be realised, is still a question for the future.

Closely connected in his mind with education and temperance, as means to the moralisation of the people, was the purifying and cheapening of parliamentary elections. Speaking [2] of the Corrupt Practices bill at the beginning of 1882 he said, 'We ask for that measure, not merely as a means of putting a stop to that disgraceful traffic in votes of which we have been spectators in this city, but also as a means by

[1] Above, pp. 80, 81.

[2] At a meeting of the North Ward Liberal Association, Jan. 10, 1882.

which access to parliament might be made cheaper. . . . As long as we have a parliament which is in fact a sort of club of rich men, we shall not have a parliament which has the interest of the struggling and suffering classes of society at heart. . . . In past parliamentary elections in Oxford we have trusted too much to the services of paid men, and not enough to unpaid but disinterested enthusiasm. . . . I have long been asking myself why it is that whereas a municipal vote costs about one shilling, it should cost one pound or rather more at a parliamentary election. . . . The liberal electoral expenditure at the recent election did not, it is true, amount to one half of the conservative; but I still say deliberately that it was at least three times as great as under a healthy system it would have been.' The contest to which he refers was that in which Sir William Harcourt, having won the seat by a majority of 112 in April, 1881, and resigned it on his appointment to the home secretaryship, was turned out by Mr. Hall by a majority of 54 in the following May. He had taken an eager part (to the detriment of his already failing health) in getting up the petition by which Mr. Hall was unseated for bribery by his agents, and which brought about the commission of enquiry into corrupt practices at Oxford. As his sole object was to have the facts fairly exposed to the light, he did not resent the impartial severity with which the commissioners included some of his friends in their condemnation, though he did not allow it to diminish his conviction of their comparative innocence.

Enough has been said to show what were the objects to which his civic activity was chiefly directed.

They may be summed up, in the words in which he once described[1] his idea of a true liberal program, as 'the removal of all obstructions which the law can remove to the free development of English citizens.' Naturally therefore it was comparatively seldom that he expressed himself in public on questions of general policy, domestic or foreign, though he followed them attentively and formed emphatic opinions on them. The distinctive policy of lord Beaconsfield's government between 1874 and 1880 roused all his strongest antipathies. He denounced[2] the 'additional outlay of 8,000,000*l.* a year' which had only resulted 'in making England more talked about in Europe'; the application of Indian taxes, avowedly raised for the prevention of famine, to pay for a 'wanton and needless Afghan war'; the anti-Russian policy which 'had played into the hands of Russia at every turn'; the 'refusal to act in concert with Europe for the coercion of Turkey'; the 'betrayal of Greece at the congress of Berlin'; the 'departure from honesty and straightforwardness in national dealings.' Of the new liberal administration he only lived to see the beginnings, but he had time to speak clearly on one important question of principle, which had been directly raised by recent legislation, and which, as he foresaw, would be raised still more seriously in the future.

In a lecture delivered early in 1881 at Leicester on *Liberal legislation and freedom of contract*,[3] he starts from the 'noticeable difference between the present

[1] In the speech in the North Ward just referred to.
[2] Notes for a speech at Abingdon in 1880.
[3] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 365.

position of political reformers and that in which they stood a generation ago. Then they fought the fight of reform in the name of individual freedom against class privilege. Now, in appearance, the case is changed.' The object of the lecture is to show that this change is only apparent. It proceeds upon the principle that true political freedom means 'the power on the part of the citizens as a body to make the most and best of themselves,' or (which is equivalent) 'to contribute equally to a common good,' and that 'freedom of contract, freedom in all the forms of doing what one will with one's own,' is only valuable as a means to freedom in its 'positive' sense. No contract, then, is valid which 'defeats the end for which alone society enforces contracts at all,' i.e. 'that equal development of the faculties of all which is the highest good for all.' On this principle he justifies interference in the past with individual freedom in the matters of labour, health, and education, and advocates it in the future in regard to the disposition and letting of land and the sale of alcohol. 'The temptation to excessive drinking is one which upon sufficient evidence we hold that the law can at least greatly diminish. If it can, it ought to do so. This then, along with the effectual liberation of the soil, is the next great conquest which our democracy, on behalf of its own true freedom, has to make.'

The Irish land question, which at this time was in everybody's mind, comes in for a brief consideration. 'The agitation of the Land League strikes at the roots of all contract, and therefore at the very foundation of modern society; but if we would effectually withstand it, we must cease to insist on maintaining

the forms of free contract where the reality is impossible. We must in some way give the farmers of Ireland by law that protection, which, as a rule, they have been too weak to obtain for themselves singly by contract.' About a year later, in the last public speech[1] which he made, he confessed that the state of Ireland had contributed to produce in him a 'certain political depression.' Still, 'when we are told that nothing yet has been gained by the Land Act, I reply that the province of Ulster, containing one-third of the population of Ireland, has regained its loyalty: and there is no reason why in time the same result should not take place with regard to other parts of Ireland.'

The same speech contains a declaration upon another subject which had been greatly occupying the public mind. 'I suppose I need not say that with regard to Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions, not only on religious questions, but on some others, they are as repugnant to me as they can be; and I will go further and say, if once the liberal party loses anything of that religious spirit which has hitherto animated its most vigorous and self-sacrificing members, it will be a bad look-out for them. But at the same time I must say I never believed in maintaining the cause of religion by oaths and tests. I believe the religious spirit of the house of commons would not be a jot or tittle less if in the future no oath was required. All I say is that, so long as oaths are required, if Mr. Bradlaugh, after being duly elected, chooses to take the oath, the house of commons has no right to say that he shall not. If I had been at

[1] To the North Ward Liberal Association, March 7, 1882.

Northampton at the general election in 1880, so far as I can judge on looking back, I should not have voted for Mr. Bradlaugh, because there are opinions of his, not so much on religious matters, (because it seems to me that religious matters hardly come within the province of the house of commons), but on other matters, which seem to me to be those of a man whom I could not trust as a politician, while no doubt there are other opinions of his with which I heartily agree. But the question is totally different now. If I had had a vote at the election the other day, I should have given it without a moment's scruple in favour of Mr. Bradlaugh, by way of asserting the right of every constituency, so long as it and the representative conform to the law, of returning whom they please. If once the house of commons assumes the right of ejecting a man duly elected, who is willing to conform to its own regulations, the whole system of representation is a mockery.'

One other public question remains to be mentioned which interested him deeply, though he took no active part in its solution, that of the reform of the established church. His opinion, as expressed at a meeting held at Merton college in December, 1881, was on the whole against disestablishment, though he was not sanguine of the success of any other policy. The occasions for reform he classes under three heads;[1] 'firstly, the fact that half the religious life of the nation is outside the church, which leads to friction, jealousy, and waste of energy in attack and defence; secondly, the existence of a large body of men, neither

[1] The following passage is taken almost *verbatim* from the notes which he wrote for his speech.

highly speculative nor hostile to the established forms of worship, who are kept out of the church by the requirement of declarations, and (in a less degree) by the exclusive and hierarchical tone of clerical opinion; thirdly, the want of congregational life in the church. What is the remedy? Shall we leave the movement in the direction of disestablishment and disendowment to take its course? There is much to be said for this alternative, but the evils connected with it are so great that we should think twice before we acquiesce in it. Firstly, there is the embittering of social relations which must take place in the struggle. Every clergyman with a wife and family will regard the movement as a personal wrong. Secondly, the most drastic measure of disestablishment and disendowment must leave the fabrics at least to the episcopalian sect. There would be a great struggle as to whether it should be a catholicising or an evangelical sect which should retain them, and whichever prevailed, the result would be lamentable. Probably it would strengthen the romanizing movement, and cause many to break altogether from the offices of religion, who otherwise would not do so, and make any *via media* between evangelical religion and current enlightenment more difficult. Lastly, it would make the clergyman of the future either a mere priest or a mere preacher, instead of the leader in useful social work and in the administration of such public business as is not directly administered by the state, as he now often is. What is the alternative? To congregationalise the church, without disestablishment and disendowment. Subject to a general control by the bishops, who should see that

no unfit persons were ordained, and that a certain elastic uniformity was maintained in the order of worship, we would give congregations control over the appointment of the clergy, over the ceremonies, and over the formulas used in worship: as regards the last, there might be alternative forms and optional omissions, the congregation to decide which should be used and which omitted. We would further not require any declarations of opinion at ordination. This proposal excites great suspicion, because it is thought to be designed to enable "infidels" to enjoy the loaves and fishes. But a man who did not desire to perform the work of a clergyman efficiently, and who did not feel that he could do so, (which implies that he is in harmony with his congregation on the main points of christian feeling), would have no temptation to take orders. The success of any such plan manifestly depends on the possibility of restoring congregational life in the parishes. Perhaps it is too late, but we may begin by trying to do this.'

It must often have occurred to observers that a man of these interests and capacities was marked out to represent Oxford in parliament, and pressure was put upon him to do so. But in one of his last speeches[1] he declared that 'since the days of his youth he had not seriously entertained any such idea, and that for personal reasons it was absolutely out of the question.' The prevailing reason was doubtless his weak nervous organisation, which he felt could not bear the strain of political life. Even in municipal affairs he was frequently obliged to excuse himself from work on this ground. The

[1] To the North Ward Liberal Association, Jan. 10, 1882.

exertion of speaking, the atmosphere of crowded rooms, and his constant anxiety to keep the peace exhausted him and took away his sleep. Had he been made of tougher material, it is very doubtful whether philosophy or politics would have secured his allegiance. He was a weighty speaker, but not fluent or eloquent, nor would he probably have been a ready debater. But he had the statesman's eye for situations and insight into the real forces which move society. He could be conciliatory without compromising himself, and knew how to work upon principles without talking about them. If he was not what is ordinarily called 'a man of the world,' he had the intuitive knowledge of human nature which comes of great reflective power and keen observation combined with singleness of aim, and which sees through the concealments of others because it has itself nothing to conceal. A friend who was often with him between 1874 and 1882 writes; 'It was after I left Oxford and settled in London that I really enjoyed most of his society and friendship, having formed the habit of visiting Oxford for some weeks each September, when he was back from his summer holiday. Perhaps the difference of our pursuits, and the absence of the professional sense which Oxford residents have for one another, gave freshness to our old familiarity. My recollection of these last eight years of his life is that in his presence I never felt a moment's dulness or found conversation for a moment flagging. He seemed always full of curiosity to know everything that one was doing or thinking, and he had then himself acquired so large a practical experience as a citizen of Oxford, and in

matters of general interest, that his conversation gained a fulness and variety which it had not had before. Our intercourse at these times was not cheerful only, but merry and full of laughter. And I must say that, to appreciate him as he deserved, it was necessary to have seen and known something of the mixed society of London, and of the people who work there. Much as he was reverenced in Oxford, I do not think that his immense superiority is even now understood by those whose life has been passed mainly in the university. My own admiration for him was greatly increased, not lessened, by forming some acquaintance with men who stand high in London.'

It remains to complete the sketch of his work as a teacher and writer, which, whatever other possibilities may have lain in him, was as a matter of fact the chief work of his life. In 1878 he obtained the position in the university which many had long considered to be his due, the Whyte's professorship of moral philosophy, and was able to develop his principles more systematically than the position of a college tutor and the requirements of the examinations had hitherto allowed.

The subjects on which he lectured during the four years of his professorship were as follows; *Moral philosophy* in the summer term of 1878, *The theory of duty* in the three following terms, *The principles of political obligation and the social virtues* in the October term of 1879 and the Hilary term of 1880, *Some metaphysical and psychological questions preliminary to moral philosophy* in the October term of 1880, *Desire, reason, and will in their relations to morality, Duty, and*

conscience, *The ideal of virtue in Plato and Aristotle compared with that by which we are now influenced* in the three terms of 1881, *The application of moral philosophy to the guidance of conduct* in the Hilary term of 1882. All these lectures were delivered from carefully written manuscripts, and the greater part of them formed the substance of a book, entitled *Prolegomena to ethics*, which he was composing at the same time and which was published after his death. The course on *Political obligation* and those parts of the other courses which were not incorporated in the *Prolegomena* have been printed in the second volume of his collected works. During the same period he engaged some of his pupils and friends on a translation of Hermann Lotze's *Logik* and *Metaphysik*, and himself translated Book I. of the latter and the third chapter of Book II.; the work was completed and published in 1884. The influence of Lotze is probably to be traced in his increased sense of the necessity for a reconsideration of Hegel's principles, expressed in a review of John Caird's *Philosophy of religion* in 1880.[1] He also read more of Fichte in his later years, and made frequent resolves to study Herbart, but these were not carried into effect. Though he was constantly reproaching himself with his ignorance of philosophical literature, he never overcame his native repugnance to wide reading. He liked, as he used to say, to 'browse' amongst books, and it was by brooding over the great sayings of philosophers rather than by traversing their systems in detail, that he seemed to get most of his intellectual nourishment. His mind was reflective, not accumu-

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 138–146.

lative. He always seemed to be strengthening his hold upon certain fundamental truths, and this tenacity arose, not from prejudice or the force of habit, but from a growing experience of their reasonableness. Probably no amount of extraneous reading would have materially affected his ultimate convictions, but it might have given him greater power of expressing and illustrating them, and have diminished the monotony and iteration which sometimes characterise his later writing.

It must be remembered, however, that his appointment to the professorship coincided with a marked failure in his health. Already in 1876 he had found it advisable to take a holiday, and was in Italy, chiefly at Florence, from February to May, with his wife and Mr. and Mrs. A. H. D. Acland. In 1878, besides the sleeplessness which had long troubled him, he became subject to fits of giddiness, and other symptoms of congenital disease of the heart began to show themselves. Nervous as he was, it was remarkable that he was able to go on with his regular work as well as he did, but he could not fail to show occasional depression. In a letter of August, 1879, he says, 'I have been getting a little writing done, preparatory to a book on moral philosophy, but as soon as I seriously begin it, I find how long it will take to do what I want to do and how little equal I am to it. Writing now is very different from what it was ten years ago. Then there were much larger vistas of possibility, and I thought I had got hold of a key which I find now will not unlock so much as I fancied it would. But I must make a push now, or I shall leave the world with nothing done.'

CHAPTER IX

MORAL AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

IT was eleven years before the date of the letter just quoted that Green had published his essay on *Popular philosophy in its relation to life*, and it certainly breathes greater freedom and confidence than the *Prolegomena to ethics*. Yet it is interesting to notice that in both the necessity for a more adequate philosophy of life is urged upon the same grounds. The *Prolegomena* begins by pointing out that it is in the poetry of our time, poetry such as *In memoriam* or *Rabbi ben Ezra*, that many thoughtful men find the expression of their deepest convictions, and that, though the convictions thus expressed seem to be logically irreconcilable with many of the conclusions of popularised science, they are content to hold the two side by side in their minds, and rather resent than welcome any attempt of philosophy to adjust their respective claims to acceptance. 'Poetry,' he imagines them to say or think, 'has a truth of its own, and so has religion—a truth which we feel, though from the scientific point of view we may admit it to be an illusion. Philosophy is from the scientific point of view equally an illusion, and has no truth that we can feel. Better trust poetry and religion to the hold which, however illusive, they will always have on the human heart, than seek to explain

and vindicate them, as against science, by help of a philosophy which is itself not only an illusion but a dull and pretentious one, with no interest for the imagination and no power over the heart.' 'With such opinion in the air all around him, it must be with much misgiving that one who has no prophetic utterance to offer in regard to conduct, but who still believes in the necessity of a philosophy of morals which no adaptation of natural science can supply, undertakes to make good his position.'[1] These passages indicate the main drift of his thinking about ethics in these years. As in religion what most exercised his mind was the prevalent divorce between reason and faith, due as he conceived to a misunderstanding of both, and culminating in scepticism on the one side and superstition on the other, so what he saw with the greatest concern in current theories of conduct was the banishment of all higher aspirations to the region of fancy and sentiment, and the growing claims of natural science to occupy the ground thus left vacant by reason. And what he felt prompted to attempt was not a 'prophetic utterance' that should pierce men's hearts with a sense of their sins, or kindle them by a picture of perfection, but the humbler though not less difficult task of showing them that in their everyday life and language there was a power at work which, if they would follow its lead, would open out to them all the heights and depths of spiritual life. The right way to find a rational basis for a higher morality is not, he held, to depreciate the lower, but to show it what it really is; 'there is no other genuine "enthusiasm of

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, pp. 2, 3; cf. *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 117, 124.

humanity" than one which has travelled the common highway of reason, the life of the good neighbour and honest citizen, and can never forget that it is still only on a further stage of the same journey.'[1]

In the *Introduction* to the ethical part of Hume's *Treatise of human nature* (1874), from which these words are taken, the elementary principles of his theory of morality are already clearly expressed. So far as the statement of them there differs from that in the *Prolegomena to ethics*, the difference is mainly due to the fact that in the latter work he wrote with constant reference to what he considered the unjustifiable claims of certain representatives of natural science, claims which he had already examined in a different context in the essays on Herbert Spencer and G. H. Lewes. The basis of the theory is the conception of self-consciousness. A self-conscious being, as we have seen, is one which in being conscious of itself is also conscious of another than itself. In a being perfectly self-conscious this double but undivided activity might be indifferently represented as the continual putting of itself into another or the continual taking of another into itself. In a being, like man, of imperfect self-consciousness the imperfection may similarly be represented in one of two ways, either as an incomplete appropriation of its object by the subject or as an incomplete realisation of the subject in the object. Such imperfect self-consciousness constitutes want, the consciousness of a something better to be or do, in the being or doing of which the self would find satisfaction. Of the resulting impulse to get rid of the want there are two

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 371.

chief forms, usually distinguished as the theoretic or speculative and the practical or moral. To the first are due the various efforts to observe, explain, and express the nature of the world, from the first crude essays of the child or savage up to the highest constructions of science, philosophy, and art; in all such efforts the subject begins by being conscious of its object as something over against and alien to it, with which it desires to feel itself at one, and in so far as it does so finds satisfaction. From the second form of impulse arise the various activities which aim at bringing into existence some object which the self is conscious of wanting, and the production of which would make it better off than it actually is; in this case that of which it is primarily aware is a deficiency in itself, and it regards the world over against it as a medium for supplying this deficiency and giving reality to the completeness which is as yet only an idea. In both forms of impulse it is one and the same self which is active; in both it is seeking some more adequate or perfect state of being; in both that which moves it to activity is an object which is the other of itself, its own necessary correlative and complement.[1]

Self-consciousness or reason, then, is practical or moral in so far as it seeks satisfaction in giving existence to an object adequate to itself; as man is capable of knowledge because he is a being for whom there are facts, so he is capable of conduct or morality because he is a being who has objects. And as the primary question in a theory of knowledge must be, What makes a 'fact'? so the primary question in a theory of morality must be, What makes an 'object'?

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book ii. Chapter 2.

The analysis of knowledge led to the conclusion that all fact is relationship, that is, that every feeling which is a felt fact or feeling of a thing is so because it qualifies and is qualified by other feelings, actual or possible; and this mutual qualification was found to imply a single and selfsame subject which is present in but distinct from its feelings, and in virtue of which they make one system of interrelated elements. The analysis of action leads to an analogous result. An object of desire is always in the last resort an idea of self-satisfaction. The object of which hunger, for instance, is the desire, is not, speaking strictly, food, but the particular kind of satisfaction which is got through eating the food. To have an object, then, is to be conscious of something which we are not but which we wish to become, and the existence of objects of desire implies the existence of a self conscious of unrealised possibilities. Only in virtue of such consciousness do the various wants to which we are subject become wanted objects. Thus hunger considered simply as a certain state of discomfort, accompanying a certain condition of the body, is an event which comes and goes, without qualifying or being qualified by any previous or subsequent feeling; and in this sense it may be called a merely animal appetite, leading to certain bodily movements, but having no moral character whatever. But hunger is a very different thing when it is felt in a context of other feelings, when, for instance, it carries with it the remembrance of past and anticipation of future pleasure in its satisfaction, and when this pleasure is thought of as conducive or not conducive to health, and through health to some ulterior object of which health is a necessary

condition. In order for this to be the case the hunger must have ceased to be simply a feeling preceded and followed by other feelings, and must have become an element in a consciousness to which past and future form one present; instead of being an isolated sense of discomfort prompting to its removal, it is now one among other constituents in a permanent desire for satisfaction. Thus the existence of a world of desirable objects, no less than that of a world of knowable facts, is due to self-consciousness; for it is the presence of self-consciousness in wants, distinguishing itself from them in the act of experiencing them, that makes them into more than wants, into wants of something, acts of a desiring subject and elements in a desired object. This object may be most generally expressed as personal satisfaction or well-being, the desire for which constitutes personal 'interests' as distinct from mere recurrent wants, and makes the most objectless human life into a sort of system, in which the particular desires meet and are mutually qualified in the conception, however vague or inconstant, of something desirable on the whole.[1]

Action, in the only sense in which it has any moral quality, takes place when the self identifies itself with some object of desire; in other words, when it makes real the idea of some better state of being, and in satisfying a want satisfies itself. Only when this is the case, or is assumed to be the case, does a man consider himself, or is he considered by others, a moral agent, responsible for what he does. A man may, in a sense, experience wants and perform acts without having an object or being an agent; such are what we

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book ii. Chapters 1 and 2.

call 'unconscious' or 'instinctive' wants and acts, which give rise to physical effects but are not qualified or determined by any previous consciousness, and which may therefore be said to happen to the subject but not to be his. As we are only aware of such cases through subsequent reflection, they are not, as such, elements in our moral experience; it is only when they have been taken up into self-consciousness that their nature, apart from self-consciousness, can be inferred. Moral responsibility, then, with the various feelings and acts to which it gives rise, is a consequence of self-consciousness; shame, remorse, repentance, praise and blame, reward and punishment, and all the agencies of moral education, owe their existence to the fact that each man is conscious in himself, and assumes others to be conscious in themselves, of originating the objects for which he and they live and act, in other words, their motives. A motive is a desired object, and a desired object is an idea of self-satisfaction. A motive, therefore, is not something independent of a man which acts upon him from without; it is the conception of himself as capable of something other than that which at the moment he is. And conversely, when the self is said to originate its motives, it is not meant that the self is something which first exists on its own account and then brings into existence something else called objects. Where there is a self there is an object, and where there is no self there is no object; and again, where there is a self there is action with a motive, for self-consciousness in its very essence is conscious activity, an activity which is kept in motion by the consciousness of something which it is not.

In the same sense in which man originates his motives, he is a 'free' agent. An agent is free when it is self-determined, i.e. when it is not determined by anything outside itself. Now that which determines the self to act is a motive, and a motive is some idea of itself as a subject to be satisfied, so that the action of a motive upon the self is really a form of that interaction of self and not-self which constitutes self-consciousness. Free action, then, does not mean unmotived action; it does not mean that a man first has a number of motives before him, and eventually acts independently of any of them; on the contrary, it is just the adoption of a motive which constitutes action, and what are called motives when a man is yet in suspense are not real but only possible motives, possible states of himself which he presents to himself without as yet becoming any one of them. On the other hand, while it is true to say that all action is 'determined' because it has a motive, this does not imply that it is determined as one event is by another event outside itself, but on the contrary that it is self-determined, for the determining force or motive is nothing but the conception of the man's self. Now action on its inner side, considered apart from its sensible manifestation, is will, the decisive adoption of a certain object of desire. Thus the question whether the will is free, or whether man is free to will, is strictly speaking a question which admits of no answer because it is asked in inappropriate terms. In the terms in which it is asked it implies 'some agency beyond the will which determines what the will shall be, and that as to this agency it may be asked whether it does or does not lie in the man himself.'

But 'in truth there is no such agency beyond the will, and determining how the will shall be determined; not in the man, for the will *is* the self-conscious man; not elsewhere than in the man, not outside him, for the self-conscious man has no outside. He is not a body in space with other bodies elsewhere in space acting upon it and determining its motions. The self-conscious man is determined by objects, which in order to be objects, must already be in consciousness, and in order to be *his* objects, the objects which determine him, must already have been made his own. To say that they have power over him or his will, and that he or his will has power over them, is equally misleading.' It follows that there is no point in urging, as is sometimes done, that moral freedom 'merely' rests on the evidence of consciousness, and may therefore be an illusion because the consciousness may possibly not correspond with reality; for the only reality in question, the only reality which moral action requires or admits, is a reality of consciousness.[1]

The same line of thought will show why man as a moral agent cannot rightly be represented as a part of nature, or the theory of morality as a branch of natural science. The attempt to do so involves the confusion of supposing that the principle or activity to which nature is due can be contained in and derived from its own partial manifestations. The word 'nature' may be used in many senses, but in the sense in which it is applied to the subject of natural science it means the world of possible experience or sum of verifiable facts. Now experience or conscious-

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book ii. Chapters 1 and 2; *Works*, vol. ii. p. 320.

ness of fact involves two things; on the one hand, the presentation of objects under the conditions imposed by our physical organisation, the conditions of time and space, on the other hand, the presence in such presentations of a principle which is not temporal or spatial, in virtue of which successive and coexistent phænomena make one world. This double way of describing experience, to which we are driven by analysis, must not be understood to mean that the consciousness of reality is a double consciousness, one *and* many, same *and* diverse, for the very essence of it is that it is one *in* many, same *in* difference. But the incompleteness of human experience brings with it a perpetual contradiction, which may be expressed by saying either that the unity of the world always remains for us an unfilled form, or that the multiplicity of the world always remains for us an infinite series. If we say that we are conscious of the world as one, we have also to say that we are only conscious of it gradually and piecemeal, that is, as merely manifold; if we say that all our experience is particular, that is, of a number of independent events or objects, we have also to admit that every particular experience goes beyond its particularity, and gets all the qualities which particularise it from relation to a whole of which it is part. This may be summed up in the statement that a fact of science is never the whole fact; that is to say, if science means the consciousness of the ascertainable conditions of phænomena, completeness can never be found in it, because the self of which it is the activity is always potentially more than it knows. And for this reason, because in knowing nature we exercise an activity

which is more than nature, we must say that nature, as the subject of science, implies a principle that is not natural, i.e. a principle which is not contained in any one or any number of the particular phænomena which together make nature, and therefore is not derivable from them.

If this is true of self-consciousness in its intellectual experience, it is equally true of it in its moral experience. Moral facts are no doubt in one point of view facts of nature; the motives and acts which constitute them are occurrences preceded by other occurrences in an endless series, each of which would not be what it is but for those which precede it. But the question is, to what this necessary connexion is due, and what the nature of the antecedents is with which a motive can rightly be said to be necessarily connected. The mutual determination or causal connexion of any two events is only possible through the medium of a unity in which both are factors; and if this is true when the relation between the events is one of simple succession, still more obviously is it true when they are related to each other as elements in a personal life and character. A motive is a desire for personal well-being, and it can only be qualified by an antecedent event if that event is also a constituent in the same personal consciousness. If it be said that the personal consciousness must have had a beginning, and that on its first emergence it was developed from a previous occurrence which did not consist in personal consciousness, it must be answered that 'development,' if it means anything, implies some identity in that which is being developed, and that there is no identity between e.g. a desire for self-satisfaction and a nervous

process, unless the nervous process has already been conceived as an element in the self-satisfaction. The same holds good of the attempt to explain moral action as the result of 'circumstances.' A circumstance is nothing if it is not a circumstance of or to something, and it is only when it becomes a circumstance to a consciousness of unrealised possibilities, i.e. to self-consciousness, that it becomes a determining factor in moral development. Should the question be still asked, If the self-consciousness implied in moral action is not derived from nature or circumstances, what then is its origin? the answer must be that it has no origin. 'It never began, because it never was not. It is the condition of there being such a thing as beginning or end.' [1]

It seems then that the moral activity of man can only be explained by supposing that an eternal mind or self-consciousness reproduces itself as human personality, using as means various processes of nature; and that though its reproduction is qualified and limited by these processes, the human experience which is its product nevertheless carries with it through all such qualifications and limitations the essential characteristic of that which produces it, the characteristic of being an originative and free activity, conscious of itself as its own object. Why the eternal mind should so reproduce itself in humanity we cannot know, any more than we can know why there is a world at all. 'We can only say that, upon the best analysis we can make of our experience, it seems that so it does,' and that only by means of such a

[1] See, for the last two paragraphs, *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book i. and Book ii. Chapter 1.

conception can we understand 'how (not *why*, but *how*) we are and do what we consciously are and do. Given this conception, and not without it, we can at any rate express that which it cannot be denied demands expression, the nature of man's reason and man's will, of human progress and human shortcoming, of the effort after good and the failure to gain it, of virtue and vice, in their connection and in their distinction, in their essential opposition and in their no less essential unity.' If then all human action properly so called, whether good or bad, implies this conception, the next question is, How does a good act differ from a bad one? To will, as has been seen, is to adopt a certain motive, to make a certain object one's own, to become something which one had desired to be. The will is good so far as the motive or object or state of being is good, i.e. is such as the self, having regard to its essential nature, ought to find satisfaction in. What then is that essential nature, and what obligation does it impose upon the self? Its nature is to be self-conscious, to be itself and another in one, and it fulfils its nature so far as it achieves this. To achieve it absolutely is impossible for man; to him the antithesis between self and not-self is never fully overcome; it always remains to some extent a consciousness of self *and* another, not of self *in* another. The utmost then that man attains to is the simultaneous consciousness of possible perfection and of actual imperfection, and in proportion as he lives habitually in this double consciousness he lives well. In other words, an act is good in proportion as in doing it the agent is conscious that he is doing his best and at the same time that there is infinitely

better to be done, conscious that he is realising himself and finding satisfaction and yet that he is infinitely far from being what he has it in him to be. And conversely an act is bad in proportion as the agent regards the particular object attained in it as the only thing worth having in the world, and himself in attaining it as complete; in proportion, that is, as he identifies his actual with his possible self, and invests the former with the absoluteness which only belongs to the latter.

Thus virtue and vice, unselfishness and selfishness, owe their existence to the same activity, working under limiting conditions; it is because man is conscious of himself as an end to himself that on the one hand he is able to find himself in any object, however trivial, and that on the other hand no object, however great, can ever give him complete satisfaction. The scale of selfishness and unselfishness may vary indefinitely according to the powers and opportunities of the individual, but the principle in both is always the same. The best life is that in which the consciousness of possible perfection is the most operative, i.e. in which it leads a man to have the greatest amount of objects and do the greatest amount of acts with the fullest consciousness that they are each and all only means to a more absolute end and elements in a larger activity. This may be otherwise expressed by saying that the good will is that which wills the unconditionally good or desirable; which does not mean a will which wills nothing in particular, but one which in every particular thing that it wills is conscious of something of absolute value which gives whatever value it has to that particular act. Or we may say that a man is good in proportion as he lives

in the consciousness of a vocation, i.e. of some work which makes a continual demand upon him, a demand which he can never satisfy but to which all that he does is an imperfect response. Or again, a good man is one who recognises everywhere a law which has to be obeyed at all costs, a law which is the expression of his own best self and in obeying which he is therefore free, but which he can never perfectly obey, and which therefore always exercises a certain constraint upon his inclinations. Or, once more, a man is good in proportion as his will is at one with his reason; i.e. in proportion as the several objects which he makes his own, and the several acts which he does, embody that idea of perfect self-satisfaction through perfect self-sacrifice in which the self-conscious reason makes itself known in him.

These various expressions may be summed up in the formula, that the only absolutely good or desirable or valuable thing in the world is good will, and, conversely, that good will is that which wills what is absolutely good, desirable, or valuable. It is not a defect but a necessity of any such formula that it should be 'circular,' for to a subject which is its own object nothing can be absolutely satisfying except the best state of itself, and the best state of itself can only be that in which it attains absolute satisfaction. And similarly it is no defect but a necessity of any adequate conception of goodness and the good that it should be entirely ideal. The demand to have it proved from some prior conception or verified in particular objects of experience implies a radical misconception of its nature; in the only sense in which it admits of proof or verification, we prove it in every moral judgment

that we make and verify it in every responsible act that we do, for it is nothing more or less than our own personality in operation.[1]

The apparent indefiniteness which attaches to the account just given of the end of life cannot be got over by ignoring self-consciousness or substituting for it one of its partial products, as is done by the doctrine that the object of all desire is pleasure and the best life that which produces the greatest amount of pleasure on the whole. The prestige and influence which this doctrine has had in England is due to its adoption by men of noble character and conspicuous ability, who 'had the great lesson to teach, that the value of all laws and institutions, the rectitude of all conduct, was to be estimated by reference to the well-being of all men, and that in the estimate of that well-being no nation or class or individual was to count above another.' It is the enforcement of this lesson, not the theory that the end of life is pleasure, that has made utilitarianism a power for good. Its most illustrious representatives have been preoccupied with great projects of political and social reform, and with this preoccupation 'it has mattered little for practical purposes that they held the well-being of society to consist simply of the net aggregate of pleasures enjoyed by its members, and that they founded this view on the principle that some pleasure or other is the sole object of any desire.' The attractiveness of such a principle (quite apart from any countenance which it might be made to lend to a low view of life) lies in its apparent definiteness ; in pleasure,

[1] See, for the last three paragraphs, *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book iii. Chapters 1 and 2.

which everybody supposes himself to understand, it seems to furnish a criterion, at once simple and exact, by which the good and evil of actions may be estimated. But this definiteness turns out on examination to be illusory. Pleasure, as such, is the feeling which accompanies the satisfaction of desire or attainment of an object. When then pleasure is said to be the motive of desire, it is not actual pleasure that can be meant, (for so far as we are pleased we have ceased to desire), but pleasure remembered and anticipated; the motive to action is always a consciousness of want, and in some cases the want may be for a certain kind of pleasure. Thus while hunger cannot be excited by the pleasure experienced in its satisfaction, it may be accompanied and reinforced by desire for a particular kind of pleasure anticipated in eating a particular food. Strictly speaking, then, it is never pleasure as such, but pleasure conceived as an element in self-satisfaction, which is the motive in desire.

The importance of this apparently minute distinction is that it brings out the fact, insisted on above, that in all desire and satisfaction of desire there is more than simple feeling. Pleasure in the sense of a feeling which comes and goes and never recurs, can be no element in human happiness; a being which had had a million such pleasures would have had no more enjoyment than if it had had only one. But this is not what anybody really means when they talk of pleasures as objects to be sought or avoided; they mean states of themselves, each of which increases or diminishes the other, and thus modifies the whole which they call their happiness. And this implies a self which in the act of experiencing the pleasures

distinguishes itself from them, compares them as sources of satisfaction, and remains with its demand for satisfaction unexhausted when they have passed away. It is only the tacit assumption of this self that gives any meaning to the phrase 'sum of pleasures,' or any plausibility to the theory that the good and evil of life can be calculated in terms of pleasure and pain. Pleasures cannot be added together, still less can they be distinguished as better or worse, unless they are present to a subject which measures them by reference to its own development and judges of them by reference to its own interest. So far then from pleasure being the sole object of desire, it seems that pleasure pure and simple is never its object, and so far from its supplying a definite standard of moral value, it seems that whatever definiteness it has is due to something in it other than pleasure, to that very desire for perfection or self-realisation the indefiniteness of which hedonism proposes to remedy.

Pursuing the same line of thought we see why it is that pleasure, so far as it is made the object of human life, is necessarily an inadequate one. Man in virtue of self-consciousness is an object to himself, his own beginning and his own end; he is thus essentially originative, has a permanent initiative, is ever passing from possibility to realisation, and from this again to a new possibility. Now pleasure is the feeling of self-satisfaction; it is the moment in which he is what he wants to be, in which he has no longer any object, any consciousness of unrealised possibilities. The more active his self-consciousness is, the more impossible it is for him to stay in such moments; and the more he deliberately tries to stay in them, the

more the satisfaction to which he clings slips away from him. For in order to live for pleasure, in the strict sense of the words, he must detach the feeling which accompanies the attainment of objects from the objects attained and make it into an object itself. Each time that he does this the object becomes more attenuated; the self returns upon itself instead of going out of itself; it tries to maintain its interest while the source of the interest is evaporating; it becomes less originative, more reproductive. If he could be entirely unoriginative, he might be at peace, might live, as we suppose some of the lower animals to do, 'in the moment'; but his nature makes this impossible; he cannot simply be pleased, he must needs seek pleasure. Hence the proverbial unrest of the systematic voluptuary, and the advice not to think about pleasure if you wish to get it. While then there might seem to be but little difference between the maxim, 'Get the greatest possible amount of pleasure,' and the maxim, 'Realise your possible self,' and while the practical applications of both maxims might often coincide, yet, strictly interpreted, they start from opposite points and give opposite directions. Both place the well-being of man, not in anything external to him, but in a desirable state of himself; but the one tells him to desire to be perfect, the other to desire to be satisfied; the one sets before him the infinite aspirations of the self, the other its limited fulfilments. We naturally indeed think of the life of a perfect being as one of bliss, in which the joy of attainment is not marred by any sense of imperfection; but in such bliss we must conceive, however hard it may be to do so, that self-realisation is only the other side of

self-devotion, and we shall come nearer to it by thinking of that sort of human happiness which, in the words of George Eliot, 'brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before anything else, because our souls see it is good,' than of that which consists of any amount of continued or repeated pleasure.[1]

Though however the conception of the good is not to be rendered more concrete or definite by the attempt to express it in terms of pleasure, or in terms of anything except good will or goodness, it need not therefore remain a mere empty formula. 'The practical struggle after the better, of which the idea of there being a best has been the spring, has taken such effect in the world of man's affairs as to make the way by which the best is to be more nearly approached plain enough to him that will see. In the broad result it is not hard to understand how man has bettered himself through institutions and habits which tend to make the welfare of all the welfare of each, and through the arts which make nature, both as used and as contemplated, the friend of man.' That this should be the general form of spiritual progress follows from the conception of self-consciousness. If that which makes man human is the power of being an object to himself, i.e. of seeking and finding satisfaction in something not himself which yet he recognises as his own, human progress must lie in the development of this power. And as there are two main forms in which he is conscious of this other self, the physical world and the world of persons, his progress will lie in the growing

[1] See, for the last three paragraphs, *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book iii. Chapters 1 and 4; Book iv. Chapters 3 and 4.

consciousness of unity with nature and with man, a consciousness which begins with understanding and passes into love. The conception of something good in itself or for its own sake, which moral life implies, is inseparably bound up with the conception of something good for others as well as for oneself; for the same thought of a man's self as something permanent, which carries with it the thought of a good which gives value to and survives all his transitory interests, carries with it also the thought of a continuous life in which other men participate with him and in contributing to which he survives along with them. Some such consciousness has been operative in the most primitive forms of life which can be properly called human and from which we can rightly describe ourselves as developed, and the increasing operation of the same consciousness constitutes moral progress.

That progress is traceable partly in the widening of the range of persons conscious of themselves as sharing in a common good, partly in the growing distinctness with which such consciousness has expressed itself in the organisation of life. The conception of self as related to other beings who are also selves, with whom therefore there is something to be shared, to whom there is something to be given, and from whom there is something to be received, has expanded from its germ in the simplest forms of family feeling into the recognition (at least in theory) of a brotherhood of mankind and a duty to humanity. It has developed in and through a continual struggle with selfish impulses, the impulses which prompt man to surrender his moral initiative, to acquiesce in what he is and to cling to what he has got, and which assume more

imposing dimensions as the organisation of life becomes more elaborate and its command of material greater. And hand in hand with this conception that there is a good common to all men has grown the conception that the only real good or thing of real value is personal worth or virtue. The two conceptions are complementary to each other, for the only good thing which is absolutely common, i.e. in the pursuit and possession of which there can be no competition of interests, is goodness of character. All external or material goods are in their nature limited and conditional; what one man has of them another cannot have, and what is valuable in one set of circumstances is valueless in others; that only which no one can give to a man or take from him, that which does not happen to him but which he is, the will to be good and to do good, has a value at once intrinsic and inexhaustible. Progress in the recognised standard and practice of morality has lain in the increasing articulation of this conception of personal worth, from simple valour in the struggle for the life of a family or tribe up to the many-sided devotion of all the faculties of the civilised man to the bettering of himself and mankind.[1]

The attempt to interpret moral progress cannot be separated from the attempt to conceive the end or perfect life to which it tends and in the light of which alone it can be interpreted. If the ideal of human goodness be defined as the devotion of the whole self to the perfecting of man, we cannot forget that such expressions as 'self-devotion' or 'self-sacrifice' seem to apply only to the impeded activity of an imperfect being; and the question must arise how, if at all,

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book iii.

goodness so defined could constitute or even be an element in a life, such as we conceive the perfect life, a life in which all that is good in human nature, the artistic and scientific no less than the moral capabilities, should find complete realisation. It must be admitted that such complete realisation has not taken place, and, as far as we can see, cannot take place, in any life of man as we now know him. 'Granted the most entire devotion of a man to the attainment of objects contributory to human perfection, the very condition of his effectually promoting that end is that the objects in which he is actually interested, and upon which he really exercises himself, should be of limited range. The idea, unexpressed and inexpressible, of some absolute, all-embracing end is, no doubt, the source of such devotion, but it can only take effect in the fulfilment of some particular function in which it finds but restricted utterance. It is in fact only so far as we are members of a society, of which we can conceive the common good as our own, that the idea has any practical hold upon us, and this very membership implies confinement in our individual realisation of the idea.' Yet, if human progress means anything, it must be a progress which takes place in and through human personalities; no development of the race, 'which individuals unwillingly promote but perish in promoting,' will satisfy the conception. The life of a nation or of humanity is nothing if it is not a life lived by certain individuals, and realised in the habits, institutions, and laws through which they are related to each other. Nor can progress be thought of as an endless series of events, 'unless the series is relative to

something beyond itself, which abides while it passes,' i.e. 'unless it means a progress *of* personal character and *to* personal character'; and whatever else 'personality' may mean, it must at least imply self-consciousness, 'the quality in a subject of being consciously an object to itself.'

The difficulties which these considerations raise cannot be removed by any theory; yet the idea of a development from less to more perfect life remains ineradicable and insuppressible, dominating our whole interpretation both of natural processes and of human history. 'The important thing is that we should not, in eagerness to reconcile the idea with facts known only bit by bit and not in their real integrity, lose sight of the essential implications of the idea.' Now development implies two things; firstly, that what is being developed is already somehow and somewhere a completed reality, and secondly, that this completed reality is the fulfilment of the successive stages or possibilities which constitute the development. If then we are in earnest in speaking of a 'development' of humanity, we must suppose an eternal self-consciousness which is all that the human self-consciousness has it in it to be, and which is conscious of the latter, not merely as a fact, but as an integral element in its own being and life. And secondly we must think of the end of human development as one in which what we know of our personality is not extinguished but survives in a more adequate form, as a state of being in which 'that reconciliation of the claims of persons, as each at once a means to the good of the other and an end to himself, already partially achieved in the higher forms of human society, is completed.'

Such a conception, so far from excluding society, implies it, for personal life *is* common life, the consciousness of self in and through other selves; and when we speak of devoted will as the true end of moral effort, we understand it not as the mere abstract recognition of a law, but as 'implying a whole world of beneficent social activities, which it shall sustain and co-ordinate.' Such a world, as far as we can conceive it, must always imply differentiation of functions in the persons composing it, so that the best for one would not be the same as the best for another; but in so far as contribution to the perfection of the whole was the object in living for which each lived for himself, it might be said to realise the ideal of human society. 'There may be reason to hold that there are capacities of the human spirit not realisable in persons under the conditions of any society that we know, or can positively conceive, or that may be capable of existing on the earth. Such a belief may be warranted by the consideration on the one hand of the promise which the spirit gives of itself, both in its actual occasional achievement, and in the aspirations of which we are individually conscious, on the other hand of the limitations which the necessity of confinement to a particular social function seems to impose on individual attainment. We may in consequence justify the supposition that the personal life, which historically or on earth is lived under conditions which thwart its development, is continued in a society, with which we have no means of communication through the senses, but which shares in and carries further every measure of perfection attained by men under the conditions of life that we know.

Or we may content ourselves with saying that the personal self-conscious being, which comes from God, is for ever continued in God. Or we may pronounce the problem suggested by the constant spectacle of unfulfilled human promise to be simply insoluble. But meanwhile the negative assurance at any rate must remain, that a capacity, which is nothing except as personal, cannot be realised in any impersonal modes of being.'

And if this is so, we cannot conceive that in any such realisation, whether human or divine, the spirit which is the very essence of personality, the spirit which seeks self-satisfaction in self-devotion, would be eliminated. 'There is no contradiction in the supposition of a human life purged of vices and with no wrongs left to set right. It is indeed merely the supposition of human life with all its capacities realised. In such a life the question of the reformer, what ought to be done in the way of overt action that is not being done? would no longer be significant. But so long as it is the life of men, i.e. of beings who are born, and grow, and die; in whom an animal nature is the vehicle through which the divine self-realising spirit works; in whom virtue is not born ready-made but has to be formed (however unfailing the process may come to be) through habit and education in conflict with opposing tendencies; so long the contrast must remain for the human soul between itself and the infinite spirit, of whom it must be conscious, as present to itself but other than itself, or it would not be the human soul. The more complete the realisation of its capacities the clearer will be its apprehension at once of its own infinity in respect of its consciousness of there being an infinite spirit—a consciousness which only a self-

communication of that spirit could convey—and of its finiteness as an outcome of natural conditions; a finiteness in consequence of which the infinite spirit is for ever something beyond it, still longed for, never reached. Towards an infinite spirit, to whom he is thus related, the attitude of man at his highest and completest could still be only that which we have described as self-abasement before an ideal of holiness; not the attitude of knowledge, for knowledge is of matters of fact or relations, and the infinite spirit is neither fact nor relation; nor the attitude of full and conscious union, for that the limitation of human nature prevents; but the same attitude of awe and aspiration which belongs to all the upward stages of the moral life. He must think of the infinite spirit as better than the best that he can himself attain to, but (just for that reason) as having an essential community with his own best. And, as his own best rests upon a self-devoted will, so it must be as a will, good not under the limitations of opposing tendencies but in some more excellent, though not by us positively conceivable, way, that he will set before himself the infinite spirit.'[1]

The *Prolegomena to ethics* must be read in connexion on the one side with the addresses on *The witness of God* and *Faith*, on the other with the lectures on *Political obligation*, if the solidarity of the writer's view of life is to be appreciated. Variations of phraseology and tone are not indeed wanting; as regards, for instance, the knowableness and nature of God, it has been truly observed that he speaks more confidently

[1] See, for the last three paragraphs, *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book iii. Chapter 2, A; and pp. 311 and 329.

in his religious addresses than in the *Prolegomena*. Such differences in the utterance of ultimate convictions may often be noted in speculative men. There are times at which the mind will bring into play all its dialectical subtlety, all its exuberance of fancy, all its laboriousness of illustration, in the effort to seize and express the presence of God in the world. There are other times when all such resources seem to be vain, and it takes refuge from its incapacity in a monotonous phrase, or in the absolute dumbness of concentrated action. The apparent inarticulateness or hesitation with which the *Prolegomena* treats of topics on which many persons will demand the greatest explicitness, does not arise from any decrease of conviction in the writer, but from the dread, always present to him and increasingly so as he grew older, of using strong words with little meaning. There is a sense in which the more a man realises a truth the less he can do anything except repeat it, and this would seem to have been the case with him. As he advanced in experience and reflection the central idea of the unity of all things in a self-conscious being forced itself upon him more and more irresistibly, while at the same time the vista of possible modes in which such a being might exist and work grew more and more indefinite. This produced a tendency to insist rather on what spiritual life cannot be than to attempt to picture what it is, a tendency which was further increased by the necessity of justifying his position polemically against competing doctrines.

The controversy with 'naturalistic' ethics which is waged in the *Prolegomena* must not lead us to suppose that he had abandoned the view expressed

in earlier writings that nature is 'the first stage of God's revelation of himself,' and that the pursuit of truth is 'in principle identical with the striving after God which animates the moral life.' The 'non-natural' or 'spiritual' principle to which the analysis of natural existence seemed to him logically to lead, is not a principle which supersedes, but one which fulfils, the truth of nature; by 'the spiritual' he still meant, as he had written in 1866, 'the natural rightly understood,' and by moral life not an escape from, but the 'completion' of, physical processes. In his own mind there could be no competition between laws of nature and laws of morality, for he regarded the former as stages in the self-development of the same mind as the latter; but when men of science first treat the facts which they have established as final and independent existences, and then proceed to include among them the principle of which they are the partial expression and without which they would not be facts at all, they seemed to him to be misunderstanding their own procedure, and to be on a track which must lead to the stultification not only of moral aspiration but of the scientific impulse itself. He would have adopted the saying that science tells us what is, not what ought to be, not in the sense that the actual and ideal are two independent worlds, but in the sense that any particular branch of experience, while it may be, and for scientific purposes must be, treated as self-contained, is in truth related at every point to something which goes beyond it, something which is in it but not of it, and which necessitates the conversion of the mere 'is' into an 'ought to be.' 'If,' he writes, 'it is true

on the one hand that the interpretation of nature by the supposition of ends external to it, with reference to which its processes are directed, has been discarded, and that its rejection has been the condition of growth in an exact knowledge of nature, on the other hand the recognition of ends immanent in nature, of ideas realised within it, is the basis of a scientific explanation of life. The phenomena of life are not ideal, in the sense in which the ideal is opposed to that which is sensibly verifiable, but they are related to the processes of material change which are their conditions, as ideas or ideal ends which those processes contribute to realise, because, while they determine the processes (while the processes would not be what they are but for relation to them), yet they are *not* those processes, *not* identical with any one or number of them, or all of them together.' [1]

His polemic against hedonism is animated by the same idea, the idea that it ignores the 'self-objectifying' principle involved in human action, and substitutes for a true theory of that action a spurious branch of 'anthropology.' In his examination of Hume's moral theory he had pointed out that his vital error lay in ignoring the 'originativeness' of thought or self-consciousness and attempting to explain its work as a mere reproduction of feelings, and that this attempt necessarily defeats itself; for when we have left 'nothing of the beautiful in nature or art but that which it has in common with a sweetmeat, nothing of that which is lovely and of good report in the saint or statesman but what they share with the dandy or diner-out, yet we cannot present

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 437.

even this poor residuum of an object by which all action is to be explained, except under the character it derives from the thinking soul, which looks before and after, and determines everything by relation to itself.'[1] And similarly in the *Prolegomena to ethics*, while the speculative weakness of modern modifications of hedonism is traced to the same source, their practical insufficiency is also urged on the ground that, if consistently applied, they tend to weaken the 'moral initiative.' The fact that the great utilitarians had not, as he conceived, applied their theory consistently, did not diminish his respect for them. One of the last books that he read was the *Journals and letters of Caroline Fox*, and it drew from him the remark that he would rather have been Mill than Carlyle, 'he seemed to have been such an extraordinarily *good* man.'

By 'moral initiative' he understood what he elsewhere calls 'the sense of personal responsibility' or 'conscientiousness,' meaning by the last, not the tendency 'to be always fingering one's motives,' which is 'a sign rather of an unwholesome preoccupation with self than of the eagerness in disinterested service which helps forward mankind,' but the ever-present 'idea of a perfect life with which our own is contrasted.' Such an idea, whether it issue in the 'reforming zeal' which produces observable effects, or whether it remain a hidden aspiration of the 'obscure saint,' makes a different man of him who has it. Though he may seem to be merely conforming to current opinion, he will be found on a closer scrutiny to be really reconstructing it; 'he is like a judge

[1] *Works*, vol. i. p. 353.

who is perpetually making new law in ostensibly interpreting the old.' And even if no traceable results flow from the idea, it must still be held to have that intrinsic value which belongs to every factor in human perfection, a value by which the results of the practical reformer must in the last resort equally be estimated. Conscientiousness in this sense does not depend on the amount of information or analytical power which a man possesses. The ultimate effects of any action can only be known to an omniscient being, to whom the universe of action is open, and it is not important that we should be able to trace them far; the question, 'Was I what I ought to be, or shall I be what I ought to be, in such and such an act?' can be answered by anyone who is honest with himself; for all that is required for the answer is the general consciousness that we might do better, and such a consciousness is already implied in the question, rendering superfluous all remote inquiries into particular possible shortcomings or mistakes. On the other hand, no such inquiries, however great the information or enlightenment in which they result, can do any real good to mankind, unless they are conducted and applied in a spirit which, whether it call itself 'conscientious' or not, is practically the spirit which seeks to be perfect. 'The lesson, for instance, of the mischief done by indiscriminate almsgiving, or by the sale of spirits, may have been most plainly taught by social or physical analysis, but it would be practically barren unless certain persons, each under a consciousness of responsibility for making the best of himself as a social being, charged themselves with the task of getting the lesson put into practice by society.' The action of con-

scientiousness will be 'partial in various degrees of partiality. It may appear as a zeal for public service on the part of some one not careful enough about the correctness of his own life, or on the other hand in the absorbed religious devotion of the saintly recluse. In the average citizen it may appear only as the influence which makes him conscientious in the discharge of work which he would not suffer except in conscience for neglecting, or as the voice, fitfully heard within, which gives meaning to the announcement of a perfect life lived for him and somehow to be made his own. Taking human society altogether, its action in one mode supplements its action in another, and the whole sum of its action forms the motive power of true moral development; which means the apprehension on our part, ever widening and ever filling and ever more and more fully responded to in practice, of our possibilities as men and of the reciprocal claims and duties which those possibilities imply.'[1]

Conscientiousness in the sense explained makes an act good, and the question whether its goodness is to be estimated by its motive or by its consequences has little meaning. Action in the full sense is both the adoption of a motive and the production of effects. It is only by an abstraction, due to our imperfect knowledge, that we habitually draw a circle round part of an act, and call that which is within it the act and that which is beyond it the consequences. In judging of others, indeed, we are compelled to make this abstraction and to leave out part of the whole fact, for we can never really know the motives of anyone except ourselves, and 'where we can do no

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book iv. Chapter 1.

more than guess it is wiser not to make guesses, and to confine ourselves, where no question of self-condemnation or self-approval is involved, to measuring the value of actions by their effects without reference to the character of the agents.' In so doing, however, we must not allow ourselves to be the victims of our abstraction, and to treat the act as if it were really separable into two parts, one of which can be judged by a different standard from the other or from the whole. There can be only one standard of absolute value, and if goodness means the quality of contributing to human perfection, the moral value of the observable effects of any act must be estimated by the degree in which they seem so to contribute. When then we are told that an act which was bad in motive has had good results, we must ask, Who really produced the results? Was the motive wholly bad? Were the results wholly good? A closer scrutiny will probably show that the selfish politician, for instance, 'was himself much more of an instrument than of an originating cause, and that his action was but a trifling element in the sum or series of actions which yielded the political movement,' or that what is good in the result was due to some higher influences with which the selfishness of the agent was inextricably fused. And if, conversely, the 'best motives' sometimes seem to give rise to mischievous results, we shall find that this is only because 'these "best" motives have not been good enough. If there has been no other taint of selfishness about them, yet they have been acted on inconsiderately, which means that the agent has been too selfish to take the trouble duly to think of what his action brings with it to others.'

Whether then it be judged by its motive or by its consequences, an act of self-devotion is necessarily good throughout, and 'the degree of its value will only be doubtful, so far as there may be uncertainty in regard to its tendency to yield more or less further good of the same kind in the sequel. We say "more or less," for that it tends to yield some further good of the same kind can never be really doubtful. Self-sacrifice, devotion to worthy objects, is always self-propagatory. The good will in one man has never failed to elicit or strengthen such a will in another.'[1]

It is to be regretted that in the discussion of moral value in the *Prolegomena* the contribution of scientific and artistic activity to the good of man was not, as was originally intended by the writer,[2] more fully considered. He has however given sufficient indications of the lines upon which he would have treated the subject. We have already seen[3] how he represented 'understanding' as, along with 'love,' the activity in which the self realises itself, and as one of the attributes under which we best conceive the divine nature; and in the *Prolegomena*,[4] in summing up the general characteristics of the progress of mankind towards perfection, he places 'the arts which make nature, both as used and contemplated, the friend of man,' by the side of 'the institutions and habits which tend to make the welfare of all the welfare of each.' Recognising as he did in the effort to assimilate truth or to appreciate beauty a liberation of the human spirit from its own littleness, a self-development through self-renunciation, not different

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book iv. Chapter 1, and p. 420.
[2] P. 312. [3] Above, pp. 138–9. [4] P. 180.

in kind from that which takes place in moral discipline, he could not but see in the men who have lived to find what is true or to express what is beautiful, fellow-workers with prophets and statesmen in the furtherance of human freedom. Of the former no less than of the latter he held it to be true that their efforts have been governed by the impulse, not to make life as pleasant as possible, but 'to make the most and best of the human soul,' and that their real success has been proportionate to the devotion with which they obeyed this impulse. And of the former no less than of the latter he implies that, however little they may articulately think of themselves as working for the good of mankind, the ultimate value of their work, like that of all other work, depends on the degree to which it contributes to the stock of better life in which all men share.[1] On the trite observation that great artists and men of science often do many selfish things, he would doubtless have made the same sort of comment as he makes on an analogous observation about Napoleon; 'it was not his selfishness that made France a nation, or presented to him continuously an end consisting in the national aggrandisement of France, or at particular periods such ends as the expulsion of the Austrians from Italy, the establishment of a centralised political order in France on the basis of social equality, the promulgation of the civil code, the maintenance of the French system along the Rhine. His selfishness gave a particular character to his pursuit of these ends, and (so far as it did so) did so for evil. Finally it led him into a train of action altogether evil. But at each stage of his

[1] *Prolegomena to ethics*, pp. 405, 415, 416, and *Works*, vol. ii. p. 145.

career, if we would understand what his particular agency really was, we must take account of his ends in their full character, as determined by influences with which his passion for glory no doubt co-operated, but which did not originate with it or with him, and in some measure represented the struggle of mankind towards perfection.' It is in this sense that we may say that 'actions of men, whom in themselves we reckon bad, are "overruled" for good.' Not that there is anything 'mysterious' or 'unintelligible' in such overruling, for 'there is nothing in the effect which we ascribe to the overruling, any more than in any effect belonging to the ordinary course of nature, which there was not in the cause as it really was and as we should see it to be if we fully understood it.'[1] Here as elsewhere he conceives the 'spiritual' as 'the natural rightly understood,' and the lower as serving the higher, not because of some miraculous conjunction, but because they are already one in principle. In order that human objects should be attained the nature that works for them must be human, and it is only as fused with something other than themselves that physical influences and animal impulses contribute to make human history. 'Some approach to this fusion we may notice in all good men; not merely in those in whom all natural passions, love, anger, pride, ambition, are enlisted in the service of some great public cause, but in those with whom such passions are all governed by some such commonplace idea as that of educating a family';[2] and what is true of relatively good men is true also of relatively

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 440.

[2] *Ib.* p. 327.

bad men, so far as they produce results which are in any real sense good.

But whatever might have been his views in detail of the functions of science and art in the spiritual progress of mankind, there can be no doubt that it was not to these, but to political and social life, that he naturally turned for the concrete embodiment of his theories. Thus the lectures on *The principles of political obligation*[1] form in some degree an illustrative commentary on the *Prolegomena to ethics*. His object in these lectures is to consider 'the moral function or object served by law, or by the system of rights and obligations which the state enforces, and in so doing to discover the true ground or justification for obedience to law'; and the conclusion which he seeks to establish is that 'the value of the institutions of civil life lies in their operation as giving reality to the capacities of will and reason and enabling them to be really exercised,' and that 'so far as they do in fact thus operate they are morally justified.' He does not write as the advocate or opponent of any particular rights or institutions, but with the aim of bringing out the significance of the fact that such things as rights and institutions exist. Here as in the rest of his philosophy he is endeavouring to awaken a consciousness of what man actually is and does in certain functions of his everyday life, this being, as he conceived, the true way to awaken the further consciousness of what he ought to be and do. The parts which will probably be read with the most interest are those which treat of the general relations of subject

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 335–549.

to sovereign and of the special cases of war and property.

The point of view from which he regards political society throughout is as a product, the most conspicuous product, of self-consciousness. The essential feature in it as compared with other products is that the identity in difference which all self-consciousness implies is here an identity of personal life. The 'other' of which each individual is conscious in belonging to a society is other selves or persons, beings from whom he distinguishes himself, but whom also he recognises as in some sense the likes and equals of himself, and from whom he expects a similar recognition. It is this reciprocal recognition which constitutes a 'right.' Rights only belong to a being capable of conceiving a good or interest as the same for himself and for others, and of acting for it, and conversely any being capable of such conception and action is (in the moral sense of the word) a 'person' and a proper subject of rights. No power ought to be a right, i.e. secured to the individual by society, unless it directly or indirectly furthers the exercise of this capacity, and every power which is necessary to such exercise ought to be a right. The ultimate justification of all rights, then, is that they serve a moral end, in the sense that the powers secured in them are essential to the fulfilment of man's vocation as a moral being, i.e. as a being who in living for himself lives for other selves.

Applying this conception to the relation between sovereign and subject, he is equally opposed to views which base the rights of the former upon superior force and those of the latter upon a supposed 'natural'

claim to do whatever one is inclined to. Admitting that the power to coerce is an essential element in sovereignty, he urges that 'to represent fear as the basis of civil subjection is to confound the citizen with the slave, and to represent the motive which is needed for the restraint of those in whom the civil sense is lacking, and for the occasional reinforcement of the law-abiding principle in others, as if it were the normal influence in habits of life of which the essential value lies in their being independent of it.' Civil subjection has a common source with subjection to the law of conscience, in so far as both spring from 'the rational recognition by certain human beings, it may be merely by children of the same parent, of a common well-being which is their well-being, and which they conceive as their well-being whether at any moment any one of them is inclined to it or no.' And from this common source they both retain two elements in common, 'one consisting in antagonism to some inclination, the other consisting in the consciousness that the antagonism to inclination is founded on reason or on the conception of some adequate good.' Thus to the very existence of a political society it is necessary, 'not indeed that every one subject to the laws should take part in voting them, still less that he should consent to their application to himself, but that it should represent an idea of common good, which each member of the society can make his own so far as he is rational.' He is indeed vividly aware how imperfectly the idea of common interest actually regulates the conduct either of sovereigns or of subjects; but he maintains that however 'mixed' the motives are which lead to the formation or the maintenance

of states, the results can only be explained by supposing that the 'mixture' is dominated by influences comparatively unselfish. The passage quoted above about Napoleon illustrates his view of this fusion of motives on the side of a sovereign power; in the ordinary citizen, as he is quite ready to allow, the consciousness of a common good is correspondingly limited; 'very likely he does not think of it at all in connection with anything that the term "state" represents to him. But he has a clear understanding of certain interests and rights common to himself with his neighbours, if only such as consist in getting his wages at the end of the week, in getting his money's worth at the shop, in the inviolability of his own person and that of his wife. Habitually and instinctively, i.e. without asking the reason why, he regards the claim which in these respects he makes for himself as conditional upon his recognising a like claim in others, and thus as in the proper sense a right. Without this instinctive recognition he is one of the "dangerous classes," virtually outlawed by himself. With it, though he has no reverence for the "state" under that name, no sense of an interest shared with others in maintaining it, he has the needful elementary conception of a common good maintained by law. It is the fault of the state if this conception fails to make him a loyal subject, if not an intelligent patriot. It is a sign that the state is not a true state; that it is not fulfilling its primary function of maintaining laws equally in the interest of all.'[1]

Where this is the case, where the individual citizen honestly believes that some command of his political

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Principles of political obligation*, F and G.

superior is not for the common good, the question may arise, how he ought to act. To this he replies unhesitatingly that in a country where there is a popular government and settled methods of enacting and repealing laws, 'he should do all he can by legal methods to get the command cancelled, but till it is cancelled he should conform to it'; for 'the common good must suffer more from resistance to a law or to the ordinance of a legal authority, than from the individual's conformity to a particular law or ordinance that is bad, until its repeal can be obtained. In cases where no repeal by legal means is possible, he points out, consistently with his general view, that the 'right of resistance' should rather be called the 'duty of resistance'; that the question ought not, as has often been done, to be put in the form, What sort of injury gives the citizen a natural right to disobey the law, but in the form, When, for the sake of the common good, the citizen ought to disobey it; and that 'instead of discussing the right of a majority to resist, we should discuss the duty of resistance equally possible for a minority or a majority.' The considerations (necessarily general) which he offers on this point are such as to throw upon the individual the burden of proving that he is in the right. 'The questions which the good citizen should ask himself in contemplating such resistance will be, (*a*) What prospect is there of resistance to the sovereign power leading to a modification of its character or an improvement in its exercise without its subversion? (*b*) If it is overthrown, is the temper of the people such, are the influences on which the general maintenance of social order and the fabric of recognised rights

depend so far separable from it, that its overthrow will not mean anarchy? (*c*) If its overthrow does lead to anarchy, is the whole system of law and government so perverted by private interests hostile to the public, that there has ceased to be any common interest in maintaining it?' The principle underlying these questions is that 'the individual has no rights founded on any right to do as he likes.' If he claims a right which is unrecognised by his state, he must be able to show that it would 'contribute to some social good which the public conscience is capable of appreciating; not necessarily one which in the existing prevalence of private interests can obtain due acknowledgment, but still one of which men in their actions and language show themselves to be aware.' The practical corollary in his own mind was not, as might be suggested, that probably there is always more to be said for than against the continuance of any given law or political institution, but that it is the duty of citizens so to keep alive and active in themselves the consciousness of the common interest that the institutions which purport to embody it shall really do so, and when they cease to do so shall admit of modification by the progressive action of the same unselfish reason which originally brought them into existence.[1]

In treating of the various elementary rights implied in a political society he begins with the most elementary of all, the right of 'life and liberty,' or, as he prefers to express it, the right to 'free life,' and this brings him to the question, what grounds there are for overriding this right, i.e. for intentionally having

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Principles of political obligation*, F and G.

men killed, as is done by the state in war. At first sight the drift of his discussion might seem to be 'peace at any price'; but the point which he is really trying to enforce is that war, which is generally palliated as an unavoidable evil, is *not* unavoidable, and that we are all in various degrees responsible for the wrong which it involves. He admits that there may be circumstances under which war is the only means of maintaining the conditions necessary to the moral development of man, but he urges that there have been very few cases in which this plea could be truly made, and that even in those cases (as in a war for the preservation of political independence), though it may be hard to say precisely where the guilt lies, this is 'only a reason for more general self-reproach, for a more humbling sense (as the preachers say) of complicity in the radical (but conquerable, because moral) evil of mankind which renders such a means of maintaining political freedom necessary.' Nor does he deny that many virtues are called into exercise by war, but of those persons 'who from time to time talk of the need of a great war to bring unselfish impulses into play' he observes that they 'give us reason to suspect that they are too selfish themselves to recognise the unselfish activity that is going on all around them,' and that 'till all methods have been exhausted by which nature can be brought into the service of man, till society is so organised that everyone's capabilities have free scope for their development, there is no need to resort to war for a field in which patriotism may display itself.'

In the same spirit he denies emphatically that 'the wrong which results to human society from

conflicts between states can be condoned on the ground that it is a necessary incident of the existence of states.' A state is 'an institution in which all the capacities that give rise to rights have free play given to them, and the more perfectly each state attains this object, the easier it is for others to do so'; thus 'it is not the state as such, but this or that particular state, which by no means fulfils its purpose, and might perhaps be swept away and superseded by another with advantage to the ends for which the true state exists, that needs to defend its interest by action injurious to those outside it.' On this ground he regards the present military system of Europe as a consequence, not of the existence of independent states, but of 'the fact that the organisation of state-life, even with those peoples that have been brought under its influence at all, is still so incomplete,' and points out that though 'the dream of an international court with authority resting on the consent of independent states' is very far from realisation, 'it is important to bear in mind that there is nothing in the intrinsic nature of a system of independent states incompatible with it, but that on the contrary every advance in the organisation of mankind in states in the sense explained is a step towards it.' [1]

In dealing with the right of property he starts with the conception of property as the means or instrument of free life. Its rationale is 'that everyone should be secured by society in the power of getting and keeping the means of realising a will, which in possibility is a will directed to social good.' Such power is the condition of attaining 'free morality,'

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Principles of political obligation*, K.

and the fact that the power is often abused is not, any more than the abuse of any other liberty secured by society, a valid reason for not maintaining it. It is only when the possession of property by one man interferes with its possession by another, and thus diminishes that power to live for a common good which it exists to increase, that it loses its justification and becomes 'theft.' Now such a theory necessarily implies freedom in the acquisition and disposition of property, so long as it does not interfere with similar freedom in others, and freedom in acquisition and disposition necessarily leads to inequality; for whether property be considered 'as representing the conquest of nature by the effort of free and variously gifted individuals,' or 'as a means by which individuals fulfil social functions,' it must vary with individuality. The question then arises, whether the full development of such freedom inevitably carries with it the existence of a proletariate such as we see in modern England, 'practically excluded from such ownership as is needed to moralise a man.' If it does, the theory of property just laid down is self-contradictory; in asserting the necessity of property as a means to free moral development it is at the same time asserting that it makes such development impossible.

To this dilemma he replies that the undoubted evils which attach to the present institution of property are not due to the institution itself, but to incidental circumstances which vitiate its working. There is no reason in the nature of things why the increased wealth of one man should mean the diminished wealth of another; on the contrary, supposing trade and labour to be free, the development of capital must

mean developed distribution and greater possibilities of ownership. Nor need the employment of large masses of hired labourers, to which the accumulation of capital naturally tends, prevent the labourers, if they have sufficient education and self-discipline, from combining and becoming capitalists themselves. The recent multiplication of 'an impoverished and reckless proletariate' is not therefore to be ascribed to the maintenance of the right of individual property and the consequent unlimited accumulation of capital, but to the conditions under which the right has been acquired and the way in which it has been allowed to be exercised. 'The appropriation of land by individuals has in most countries been originally effected, not by the expenditure of labour or the results of labour on the land, but by force. The original landlords have been conquerors.' From this fact have followed at least two important consequences. One is that 'when the application of accumulated capital to any work in the way of mining or manufacture has created a demand for labour, the supply has been forthcoming from men whose ancestors, if not themselves, were trained in habits of serfdom; men whose life has been one of virtually forced labour, relieved by church charities or the poor law; who were thus in no condition to contract freely for the sale of their labour and had nothing of that sense of family responsibility which might have made them insist on having the chance of saving. Landless countrymen, whose ancestors were serfs, are the parents of the proletariate of great towns.' A second consequence of the same fact is that 'rights have been allowed to landlords, incompatible with the true principle on which rights of property rest,

and tending to interfere with the development of the proprietorial capacity in others. . . . Landlords have been allowed to do what they would with their own, as if the land were merely like so much capital, admitting of indefinite extension. . . . In fact, the restraints which the public interest requires to be placed on the use of land if individual property in it is to be allowed at all, have been pretty much ignored, while on the other hand that full development of its resources, which individual ownership would naturally favour, has been interfered with by laws and customs which, in securing estates to certain families, have taken away the interest and tied the hands of the nominal owner in making the most of his property.' His conclusion is that it is unfair 'to lay on capitalism or the free development of individual wealth the blame which is really due to the arbitrary and violent manner in which rights over land have been acquired and exercised, and to the failure of the state to fulfil those functions which under a system of unlimited private ownership are necessary to maintain the conditions of a free life.' [1]

What these functions are in the case of property he does not consider in detail. On the general subject of 'state interference' he is at pains to point out that the state not only should not but cannot enforce 'morality' in the proper sense of the word; that any attempt to compel conduct which ought to flow from social interests 'interferes with the spontaneous action of those interests,' and that thus 'the action of the state for the promotion of habits of true citizenship seems necessarily to be confined to the removal

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Principles of political obligation*, N.

of obstacles.' But he argues that under 'removal of obstacles' much ought to be included that at first sight may have the appearance of an enforcement of moral duties,' and that this applies to some public regulation of the rights of landed proprietors, in so far as their exercise at present involves the disqualification of many others, or of a succeeding generation, for due participation in them.[1]

Such considerations may suggest the remark that moral philosophy cannot be of much value if all that it can do for the evils of human society is to show that they are not irremediable, and that it is the fault of everybody if they are not remedied. The account of a moral philosopher may fitly conclude with his opinions on this point.[2] His conception of the value of moral ideals or principles in general has been already referred to. The common notion that they give no help in actual life probably arises, as he points out, from the necessity of expressing them in the form of abstract definitions. From such a statement, for instance, as that 'the true good for man is the perfection of human life,' it seems as if no one could deduce what he ought to do under any particular circumstances. This depends on what is meant by 'having an idea' such as is embodied in such a proposition. Do we mean merely 'the acquaintance of educated men' with the definition in question, or do we mean 'the practical consciousness of an ideal' which the definition formulates? The difference is as great as that between a proposition in geometry or a rule of law when they are simply reflected on,

[1] *Works*, vol. ii., *Principles of political obligation*, M.

[2] *Prolegomena to ethics*, Book iv.

and the same proposition and rule when 'applied by the geometer to a new construction' or 'interpreted by the judge in application to new cases.' What are usually called 'ideas' or 'thought' are partial or faded aspects of some fuller experience, but ideas in the sense in which they move mankind are the very experience of mankind in the making. The idea of a geometrical or legal principle is not something which the geometer or the judge first has and then applies; until it begins to be applied it is a mere otiose possibility, something which a man cannot be said really to 'think' but only to 'think about.' The value of a moral formula, then, lies, not in the fact of its formulation, but in the aspiration and activity which must be there before they can be put into words, and which are continually extracting from the words a wider and deeper meaning.

Few people however would dispute that everyone who is to do anything worth doing must in some sense have an ideal; but a philosophical formula expresses a certain *theory* of an ideal, and the question still remains, What is the practical value of having such a theory? In other words, how far can the effort to think out the principles on which we are living help us either to avoid moral perplexities or to solve them when they occur? Such perplexities, he reminds us (if we exclude from them those 'self-sophistications which arise from a desire to find excuses for gratifying unworthy inclinations'), will not be really many for persons living in a christian society; to most of us our particular duties are sufficiently obvious, and 'the function of bringing them home to the consciences of men is rather that of the preacher

than of the philosopher.' Still in a speculative age there is always a certain amount of 'moral anarchy,' due mainly to the inadequacy of the inherited formulas in which the practical principles of the age find expression. Owing to this inadequacy different formulas, each claiming authority over the conscience, will sometimes seem to reflective men to conflict with each other, and such conflicts may lead to a genuine doubt what they ought to do, or may afford a pretext to their selfishness for ignoring conscience altogether.

In such cases he thinks that philosophy may supply an antidote, an antidote which consists not in repressing but in developing and disciplining the free thought to which the danger is due. For instance, 'it is in the form of imagination, the imagination of a supreme invisible but all-seeing ruler, that, in the case at least of all ordinary good people, the idea of an absolute duty is so brought to bear upon the soul as to yield an awe superior to any personal inclination.' But 'it is a necessity of our rational nature that these forms of imagination, in which our highest practical ideas have found expression, should be subject to criticism,' and the result of such criticism must be the admission that 'statements, which in any strict sense could only be applied to an imaginable finite agent, cannot in any such sense be applied to God,' or at any rate that, if they are so applied, 'they must not be reasoned from as we reason from statements about matters of fact.' Here philosophy may meet criticism by carrying the critical spirit further; it may 'disentangle the operative ideas from their necessarily imperfect expression,' it may 'show when and how the figures of speech, being derived by

metaphor from sensible matters of fact, are liable to mislead us,' and it may 'point out what is the sense in which alone the question as to the truth of such language can be properly asked or answered.' Thus it may justify the conclusion, that 'if the infinite spirit so communicates itself to the soul of man as to yield the idea of a possible perfect life, and that consequent sense of personal responsibility for making the best of himself as a social being from which the recognition of particular duties arises, then it is a legitimate expression by means of metaphor—the only possible means, except action, by which the consciousness of spiritual realities can express itself—to say that our essential duties are commands of God.' By thus vindicating the ultimate authority of a practical idea, philosophy may strengthen a speculative mind against its own illusions and 'counteract the advantage which scepticism may otherwise give to passion against duty.'

It is only a different application of the same function which he assigns to philosophy in cases of what is usually called the 'conflict of duties.' Strictly speaking, as he points out, no such 'conflict' is possible, for 'a man's duty under any particular set of circumstances is always one.' What really happens in such cases is that a person who has been in the habit of identifying his duties with the injunctions of certain external authorities, finds in some particular instance that those injunctions compete for his obedience. There are very few people whose principles of action are not to some extent blended with the idea of an external authority imposing them. As a child cannot separate the duty of speaking the

truth from the command of its parents to do so, so to the grown man his moral obligations are as a rule so inseparably associated with some external imponent, a prophet, a priest, a king, a sovereign people, that the disappearance of the imponent would seem to him to annihilate the obligation. When the injunctions of such authorities collide, it will not serve to point out to the perplexed individual that 'external' authorities are no authorities and that he must go for guidance to his own conscience, for his whole difficulty arises from the fact that to him they are not 'external,' that he accepts them, not from fear of penalties, but because they enjoin what he personally feels to be good. Rather the object of philosophy should be to strengthen him for such emergencies by leading him, before they occur, 'to distinguish what is essential in the duties from the form of their imposition, and to guide himself by looking to the common end to which they are alike relative'; he will then be 'prepared for the discovery that the conflict is not really between duties, but between powers invested by the imagination with the character of imponents of duty.' In this way the moral philosopher may exercise a practical influence for good 'by enlisting in the real service of mankind the zeal which would otherwise become a misdirected loyalty or a spirit of unprofitable rebellion.'

The method (and we are warned that it is the only method) by which he exercises this influence must be that of analysis, the analysis of 'human conduct,' of 'the motives which it expresses, the spiritual endowments implied in it, the history of thought, habits, and institutions through which it has come

to be what it is. He does not understand his business as a philosopher, if he claims to do more than this. He will not take it for a reproach to be reminded that no philosopher can supply a "moral dynamic." The pretension to do so he would regard as a great impertinence. He finds moral dynamic enough in the actual spiritual nature of man, when that nature is regarded, as it is his business to regard it, not merely in its hitherto performance, but in its intrinsic possibilities. If he cannot help wishing for more, that is an incident of the very aspiration after perfection of conduct which constitutes the dynamic. His immediate business as a philosopher is not to strengthen or heighten this aspiration, much less to bring it into existence, but to understand it. As a man and a citizen, indeed, it is his function to serve as its organ; to give effect to it in his own conduct, to assist in communicating it to others. And since in being a philosopher he does not cease to be a man and a citizen, he will rejoice that the analysis, which alone forms his employment as a philosopher, should incidentally serve a purpose subordinate to the "moral dynamic"—that it should help to remove any obstacle to the effort of the human soul after a perfect life.' This it can do by supplying to the persons who need it (they will always be comparatively few) 'a really available criterion for estimating those further claims upon them which are not enforced by the sanction of conventional morality, and a criterion which affords no plea to the self-indulgent impulses.' Such a criterion, he submits, 'is afforded by the theory of ultimate good as a perfection of the human spirit resting on the will to be perfect (which may be called in short the theory

of virtue as an end in itself), but not by the theory of good as consisting in a maximum of possible pleasure.'

He had written the *Prolegomena to ethics* as far as these words, and only twenty or thirty pages were wanting to complete it. The new house which he had been building in the Banbury Road was just ready for occupation, and he was to move into it in March, 1882. On the evening of March 15 he was taken suddenly ill; at the end of a week dangerous symptoms of blood-poisoning appeared, and on the night of the 25th he was told that he could not live more than a few hours. Though he had often expressed a shrinking from death, and the announcement took him by surprise, he received it without any disquietude, and at once began to think of the various things that had to be done, such as the payment of pupil-teachers in a school of which he was the treasurer, and the publication of his book. He spoke to those about him of his belief in God and immortality, adding in a characteristic way that he did not know what the life beyond might be; 'if we did, we should walk by sight, not by faith.' He asked to have the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans read to him, but found the effort of listening too great. He said he should like to be buried in the Jericho cemetery, 'in the North Ward.' As the night went on his mind began to wander; he talked about current politics, the Irish Land Bill and affairs in Bulgaria; and at nine o'clock on the morning of Sunday, March 26, he passed quietly away.

He had left directions that the *Prolegomena to*

ethics should be given to A. C. Bradley for publication, and the addresses on *The witness of God* and *Faith* to Arnold Toynbee to deal with at his discretion. He had no children, and his frugal habits and natural gift for managing money had enabled him to save a considerable sum. Among the legacies to be paid after the death of his wife he left 1000*l.* to the university for a prize essay on some subject of moral philosophy, 1000*l.* to found a scholarship at the Oxford high school for boys, and 3500*l.* to Balliol college to be used in the first instance for the promotion of higher education in large towns. The university and the city joined hands to mourn his loss and honour his memory. Though he had been too shy and retiring to be widely popular, to those who knew him at close quarters he was attractive as well as impressive. 'He had,' as has been well said, 'that courtesy of manner which we are wont to praise as "old-fashioned," and that dignified simplicity which we associate rather with the country than with town life.' To the citizens of Oxford he had specially endeared himself. 'After spending an hour with him,' writes one of them, 'I always felt I had come under the influence of a superior being, and came away with a higher ideal of life.' By the transparency of his character, by his tact and wisdom, by his power of taking trouble and his liberality both in money and time, he had done more than any man of his generation to elevate and sweeten the tone of Oxford politics. The memorial fund raised was chiefly applied to found another scholarship at the high school, and probably there is no way in which he would have preferred to be remembered.

'We shall never know a nobler man'; so wrote one of his friends on hearing of his death, and with this simple expression of what many feel we may best take leave of him. It would be an idle task to attempt to measure his work, or to speculate as to the influence which he has had or will have. If the cause which he loved is going to triumph in England; if a time is coming when 'all honest citizens will recognise themselves and be recognised by each other as gentlemen'; when 'the secret of existence, which the poet now speaks to the inward ear of a few, will be proclaimed on the housetops to the common intelligence of mankind'; when 'the scientific impulse on the one side and the faith that worketh by love on the other' will be felt to be 'the same spirit in different relations'; when God will be worshipped, not 'in vision, or miracle, or mystery,' but as a real presence in all the better life of man; if such a time is coming, we need not fear to think that he has helped and is helping to hasten it. And if not, we may still say of him in words of his own, 'he let the world have its way, not from the hopelessness of the sceptic or the indifference of the epicurean, but because he knew that his own way, however lamely and blindly he pursued it, was yet that to which all the world's ways converge, and that it was the way that leadeth to eternal life.' He would not have liked high language such as this to be applied to himself, but it is true. It was the consciousness of something eternal, within and without him, that made him what he was. His wife once told him that he was like Sir Bors in the *Holy Grail*, and the likeness holds in more senses than one. A 'knight of the spirit' he assuredly

was; not Galahad, 'crowned king far in the spiritual city'; not Percivale, sadly resolved 'to pass away into the quiet life'; not Lancelot, with 'the fire of madness in his eyes'; but

> 'Sir Bors it was
> Who spake so low and sadly at our board;
> And mighty reverent at our grace was he;
> A square-set man and honest; and his eyes,
> An out-door sign of all the warmth within,
> Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a cloud,
> But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.'

And if we had asked him whether he had seen the divine vision, we can fancy that, like Sir Bors, he would have answered,

> 'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it;
> I saw it.'

INDEX

ACLAND, A. H. D., 193
American war of secession, 54, 55, 56, 86
Aristotle, *De anima*, 49; *Ethics*, 46, 50, 85, 102, 104; essay on, 50, 131
Art, 34, 37, 38, 131, 228, 229, 231
Austria, war with France, 23; war with Prussia, 86; and Italy, 229

BALLIOL COLLEGE, Green enters, 1855, 11; Green's history lectures, 11, 39; Jowett's Greek Testament lectures, 40; £400 raised for Lancashire distress, 55; death of James Riddell, 85, 86, 91; Green becomes tutor, 85 ff., 90 ff.; Edwin Palmer resigns tutorship, 86; Jowett becomes master, 86, 163; addresses to undergraduates, 137; hall of residence started for exhibitioners, 162; roll-call instituted, 163; Green's legacy, 249
Band of Hope Temperance Union, 175
Barlow, General, 56
Baur, F. C., 46, 47, 136
Baynes, Spencer, 52
Beaconsfield's policy, 1874–80, 184
Birkin, 2
Birmingham, Bright's speeches, 24; King Edward's School, 60 ff., 75; lecture to Teachers' Association, 73
Bismarck, 53
Bradlaugh, C., 186, 187
Bradley, A. C., 249
Bradley, G. G., 5
Bright, John, 12, 23, 24, 57, 169, 172
Brodrick, G. S., 171
Bruce's Licensing Bill of 1871, 178
Buckle, H. T., 20

CAIRD, EDWARD, 50, 128*n*
Caird, John, *Philosophy of Religion*, 192
Carlyle, 7, 15, 25, 81, 224
Carr, Hannah, nurse, 3
Cavour, 54
Character, 3 ff., 15, 16, 17, 33, 88–90, 95, 129, 192, 221, 249, 250
Christianity, 26 ff., 44, 47 ff., 136, 139, 145, 150, 153, 159
Church, the, 27, 44, 83, 159, 160; disestablishment, 187–189
Citizenship, 25, 27, 32, 33, 161–193, 233–236, 247, 250
Clough, A. H., 16
Cobden, 17, 57
Commonwealth, the English, lecture on, 81 ff.
Conington, John, 12, 13

Conscientiousness, 224 ff.
Corrupt Practices Bill, 182, 183
Cotton, R. L., 6
Country life and simplicity, 13, 14, 53, 88
Cromwell, Oliver, 2, 8, 31, 81–83

DALE, Rev. R. W., 76
Death, 157, 165, 248
Desire, 198 ff.
Dogma, essay, 47
Dresden, 53
Dürer, 37
Duty, 243–246

EDINBURGH, lecture at Philosophical Institution, 81; chair of philosophy, 85
Education, views on, 60–84, 169, 173, 182
Eliot, George, 213
Endowed Schools Act of 1869, 73
Essays: Queen's medal at Rugby, 5; written at college, 17; 'National Life,' 19; 'Political Idealism,' 19; 'Loyalty,' 20; 'The Force of Circumstances,' 26, 29; Ellerton Theological Prize, 27 *n.*, 29 *n.*; 'Authority and Private Judgment,' 27 *n.*; 'Conservatism,' 27 *n.*; 'The Influence of Civilisation on Genius,' 29, 30; 'Novels,' Chancellor's prize, 34 ff.; 'Dogma,' 47; 'Popular Philosophy in its Relation to Life,' 105, 132; 'Aristotle,' 131
Evans, C., 5
Eyre, Governor, 55

FAITH, 30, 31, 96, 145 ff., 149, 195
Faith, address to undergraduates, 137, 145, 220, 249
Family and the State, the, 26, 28
Feeling, 112, 116–119
Ferrier, J. F., 51
Fichte, 25, 192
Flint, Robert, 52
'Force of Circumstances, The,' essay, 26, 29
Forster's Education Bill, 173
Fox, *Journals and Letters of Caroline*, 224
France, 23, 229
Freedom, 22, 25, 29, 44, 158, 185, 201, 229, 236, 238, 239

GARIBALDI, 54
Germany, 53
Gladstone, 57
Good and evil, 216 f.
'Gospel according to St. John,' 153 ff.
Goulburn, E. M., 3
Grant, Sir Alexander, 41, 50
Green, T. H., birth and parentage, 2; Rugby life, 3–10; early life at Oxford, 11 ff.; appearance and manner, 14, 15, 33; Chancellor's prizeman, 34; fellowship at Balliol, 39, 41, 167; candidate for chair of moral philosophy at St. Andrews, 51; member of Schools Inquiry Commission, 59; manner of lecturing, 98 ff., 100 f.; delegate of Oxford Examination Board, 162; marriage, 164; political speeches, 167, 170, 171, 182, 184, 187, 189; treasurer of Oxford branch of C.E.T.S., 175; Town Councillor for North Ward, 181; Whyte's professor of moral philosophy, 191; failure in health, 167, 193; illness and death, 248
Green, Mrs. T. H., 167
Green, Valentine, 2
Green, Mrs. Valentine, 2

HARCOURT, SIR WILLIAM, 178, 183
Harper, Dr. H. D., 76, 77
Hedonism, 57, 209 ff., 223
Hegel, 50, 84, 118, 126,
Hill, Daniel Thomas, 2